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ABSTRACT

This final report is the second of three reports (Preliminary, Final, and Summary) of the findings of the 1988 Provincial Writing Assessment in Manitoba, Canada for grades 4, 8, and 11 of English language schools. It contains an overview of the purposes, procedures, and a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Writing Assessment 1988. The report's eight chapters are as follows: (1) Introduction (discussing the framework of the school writing program which has come to be known as the Writing Process Model); (2) Purposes and Procedures of the Test; (3) Grade 4 Results; (4) Grade 8 Results; (5) Grade 11 Results; (6) Comparison of 1982 and 1988 Student Writing; (7) Teacher Questionnaire; and (8) Findings and Recommendations. The report is one of a series of reports on writing assessment in regular English, French Immersion, and Franco-Manitoban programs. Four tables of data are included and 19 references and an appendix containing the results of teacher surveys at all grade levels are attached. (SR)

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MANITOBA WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

FINAL REPORT

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

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MANITOBA

WRITING

ASSESSMENT

1988

FINAL REPORT

English Language Schools

A REPORT OF THE

CURRICULUM SERVICES BRANCH

MANITOBA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

March, 1991

PREFACE

This Final Report is the second of three reports of the findings of the 1988 Writing Assessment for grades 4, 8, and 11 of English language schools. It contains a description of the study along with conclusions and recommendations based not only upon teacher opinions but also upon the judgement of the Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee reviewed the data and interpreted it in the light of their considerable knowledge and experience. Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to review the recommendations for applicability to their own programs.

There are two other series of reports in this assessment. They are the three Preliminary Reports which present the actual data and the Summary Report which presents an overview of the results along with the main conclusions and recommendations.

The Preliminary Reports were distributed to all schools in the province as well as to school division offices, to teacher and trustee associations, to libraries, and to the universities. The Summary Report will receive the same distribution as the Preliminary Reports, while the more extensive Final Report will only be distributed to school division offices, teacher and trustee organizations, libraries, and universities. Additional copies of this Final Report, however, can be obtained from Manitoba Education and Training on request.

Students in regular English, French Immersion, and Franco-Manitoba programs were tested and reported on separately. There is a complete series of reports (Preliminary, Final, and Summary) available for each of these three populations.

Acknowledgements

This assessment would not have been possible without the assistance and co-operation of people too numerous to mention: the students who wrote the tests; teachers who administered the tests; those who assisted us with the pilot testing; and teachers who took the time to complete questionnaires. Special mention, however, must be made of a number of groups and individuals:

- Winston Layne who wrote this report.
- The members of the Joint Committee on Evaluation who provided guidance throughout the project.
- The following members of the Technical Advisory Committee who aided with the analysis and interpretation of results: Marlene Ferguson, Joan Gemmell, Wayne Kroetsch, Judy Thimm, David Dreidger, Sharon Goertzen, Shirley Hogue, Gordon Jones, Genevieve Babulic, Robert Bilan, Don Blackwood, Corry Bryant, Dorothy Brummitt, Joanne Bevis, and Don Bewell.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Final Report contains an overview of the purposes, procedures, and a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Writing Assessment 1988. Further information about the more technical aspects of the test design and analysis is available from the Assessment Section of the Curriculum Development and Implementation Branch.

The 1988 Writing Assessment tests were administered throughout the Province from May 2 to May 13, 1988 to a systematic random sample of 4% of all students enrolled in grades 4, 8, and 11. Scores of students enrolled in Français and French immersion programs have been reported separately and so are not included in this report.

The Writing Process Model

The Writing Process Model for developing writing competence is incorporated in the K-12 English Language Arts curriculum. In this section the guiding principles, methods of implementation, theory, and recent research supporting this model are reviewed.

The Writing Process model views writing as an integral part of language with a variety of possible uses. It provides a developmental and cumulative method of teaching writing to the entire school from the primary to the senior grades. It offers an understanding of how writing ability develops in young writers. It offers a view of learning which will be helpful to students throughout their lives as writing is seen as a major learning tool, based upon the close relationship between thinking and language use.

The Process Model places great emphasis on the importance of talk as the first, basic means by which one learns, expresses meaning, and exchanges ideas. The benefit one derives from writing lies in its ability to reinforce learning, direct meaning, impart permanence and shape to the flow of ideas, begun in talk. It is this heuristic quality that is at the heart of writing across the curriculum. The ultimate goal of the model is to make writing available to all areas of learning.

The Model itself is coterminous with the practice of developing and shaping writing in three stages: Pre-writing, Writing, and Post-writing. Rather than just simply expecting students to write well, many teachers have taught writing using this three-step approach. For these teachers, the value of these findings of recent research and theory provide new understandings about writing development and suggest choices of effective methods or strategies at each of the three stages to improve writing competence.

The pre-writing stage should provide opportunities for incubating and crystallizing ideas. During this stage, students generate, share, explore, and select ideas, through talking with each other. They solve many problems of expression for themselves; they help one another with the mechanics; they find their own topics or adopt the topics of others. Teachers help to shape the process by establishing good habits of interacting with students and by selecting and using appropriate activities of quality and ample duration to facilitate the exploration of ideas. J. Emig (1971) found that many schools allowed too little time for pre-writing activities.

Drama, reading, and sensory activities are among the pre-writing activities which help students to generate and elaborate ideas. Sensory activities suggested often involve learning through interaction with things (Bruner 1966): pictures, sketching, music, puppetry, and evocative objects which stimulate writing.

The pre-writing stage should not only move students to write with more ideas, it should prepare them to select, arrange, summarize, emphasize, and generalize by grouping together related ideas and suggesting connections. Listing, clustering, mapping, or webbing are among the useful techniques for the orderly arrangement of ideas.

These pre-writing ideas are equally important in developing informational writing. Before such writing, students should be involved in planning, observing, reading, verbalizing, role-playing, using visuals (sketches, diagrams, charts) so that the new information is not divorced from the students' own experience. Gradually, in the process of these pre-writing activities, the new technical, scientific, or professional use or purpose of language can be mastered.

The actual writing or composing stage occurs when the writer tries to put an experience into words, moving from random thoughts, notes, comments to a first, second, or third draft in writing. The writer has to bring order to the experience and find the necessary logical connections, using the correct connectives and conventions. For many students the actual writing stage is difficult and frustrating. They try to produce a flawless first draft, free of errors, with the correct balance between what they wish to say and the need to satisfy the reader. Shaping informational or transactional writing is even more difficult as the writer must resolve the intellectual struggle between his own experience and new knowledge. For the writer to keep his own voice, the model insists on the use of the expressive or personal mode in early drafts.

The Post-writing or third stage represents the most important instructional step in the writing process. During this stage, students are given help with focussing, amplifying, sustaining, and supporting their ideas. They learn how to organize meaning, sharpen their point of view to achieve the greatest possible effect on the reader by linking purpose, voice, or stance.

Using the student's own work, the teacher gives specific help to improve the writing at the sentence and paragraph level. Teaching that is informed by such techniques as sentence-combining and Christensen's method of cumulative sentences can provide specific instructional help depending on individual need. Students are given specific help with supporting assertions, qualifying generalizations by adding modifiers, phrases, and clauses and improving sentence structure for emphasis and rhythm.

In junior years particularly, attention is given to techniques that make narration and description more vivid: such techniques as the use of "dominant" or general impression, effective summarizing, the use of dialogue to convey characterization or background, and the use of foreshadowing.

During the post-writing stage, it is proposed that students should have the opportunity to serve in several different roles at different times. The separate roles of proof-reader, reviser (reader or audience), editor, and publisher will make students more sensitive to the demands of audience and purpose.

The role of teacher in pre- and post-writing group work is to teach students to teach each other so that editing becomes learning. By working in groups, students revise their writing, change words and terms, and exchange ideas. As the writers try to respond to the wider audience of the group, they learn they must strengthen their own voice as they shift focus from themselves to the group.

The movement from simultaneous class teaching to group activities may mean a change in teaching style and approach for many teachers. Research has shown that correctly conducted peer-group proofreading and editing can eliminate the punitive nature of marking. They provide a shift in focus for the writer to a wider and more authentic audience than the teacher as examiner. Also, the approach gives the teacher time to monitor and diagnose class writing individually and in the resulting "conferencing" the voice of the teacher becomes that of a trusted adult.

Andrew Wilkinson (1971) points out that the uses or purposes of language expand in response to demands put upon the individual.

One of the advantages of the Writing Process Model is its ability to adapt to the changing needs of young writers for wider audiences and more relevant topics. In the spiral development through the grades, there are several such focal points of writing growth which necessitate accommodation as: the movement away from egocentricity in the primary years; the broadening adolescent interests of the junior years; and the need for senior students to communicate in an adult manner. These developments demand changes in the uses or purposes of writing, in audiences and topics.

The important task in primary grades is to lay the foundation for modelling the writing process.

The egocentric nature of the primary student limits the uses of writing to a fairly narrow range of purposes defined even further by the need for an immediate, close, and known audience. Joan Tough (1978) suggests seven purposes or uses for language at the primary level: self-maintaining, directing, predicting, reporting, reasoning, projecting, and imagining. Writing in these grades must be seen first as communicating and teachers are obligated to respond in a helpful, understanding manner to the meaning of the product rather than react to its surface faults and make writing synonymous with testing. Over the years of primary school, there should be a gradual distancing of audience from self to peers to teacher, as trusted adult, to other friends and adults. The different audiences and the writer's own self-monitoring will become part of an internalized sense of audience.

In junior years the uses of writing expand immeasurably to meet the needs of adolescent's growth in personal development and social competence. The language arts room becomes the meeting place of language, experience, and society (J. Dixon 1967). Adolescents discover new situations, purposes, and topics to deal with. They use language to regulate these relationships.

They are well within Paget's final period of formal operations. They are increasingly independent of concrete reality in their thinking and are capable of dealing with hypotheses and propositions. They specialize their language according to purpose and situation (J. Dixon, 1967).

Most junior students need help in organizing and sequencing ideas. This help should focus on such relationships as cause and effect, time and space, sequencing, comparing and contrasting, and the use of connectives which signal these relationships.

Personal writing with narration moving into description and exposition should predominate at this level. Personal topics and social concerns should stimulate writing for a wider audience than the teacher or peers. The sports arena, the skating rink, Main Street, the community club should be the loci for writing that describes, explains, persuades, and motivates action.

Many teachers regard senior school writing as a self-contained entity different from that of the rest of the school. This is not so. The processes for developing writing in the lower grades are essentially similar to those needed in senior school. There is no break in the continuity of the writing program.

The ability to communicate in writing is fundamental to the future success of senior students. It is necessary, therefore, to expand the purposes or uses of writing, topics, and audiences in both range and complexity.

Topics should allow for analysis, exploration, explanation, and problem-solving. Teachers should vary the way topics are formulated to influence the way students respond: closed topics to invite debate; open topics for exploration; predicated topics for opinion writing; and topics in the form of questions to allow for causal explanation.

In the senior years the pre- and post-writing activities should be more effective and sophisticated, often organized by the students themselves. Pre-writing activities should allow ample time for students to select and elaborate ideas and determine a point of view.

The imparting of information, whether in English class or in subject-area learning, will help students handle different forms of argument and organization. By giving explanations, giving instructions, compiling reports, and making requests students will learn how modes of discourse vary.

Enhanced by general reading, literary studies, and their increased knowledge gained in the content areas at school, the students' wider social experience lead to a remarkable increase in mature thought and expression.

They now think deductively and inductively at new levels of abstraction. This facility prompts such abilities in students as analyzing, defining, and describing phenomena, weighing evidence, and interpreting relationships and fuels their need for new ways of expressing ideas, feelings, processes, and procedures. Shaping meaning for new purposes and audiences involves a more discriminating choice of words than before, more complex organizational patterns, more sophisticated sentence structures and usage.

Many of these new considerations are elements of style, i.e., a combination of tone, register, and the writer's voice in the fine-tuning of language for meaning, purpose, and audience.

Underpinning the entire Writing Process Model, is an essential understanding of the relationship between the different uses, functions, or purposes of writing, the kinds of audiences they address, and the mental processes they produce. These mental processes emerge gradually in response to the personal and social development of students.

Moreover, each function or use offers different kinds of writing which spring from the different needs of writers. Each function or use looks for a different kind of response in the reader. Each function or use offers a different possibility of learning.

Both James Britton (1970) and James Moffett (1968) suggest a series of functions or uses as forms of writing on a spectrum based on the distancing of relationships between the writer and his audience and the writer and his topic.

Britton's well known continuum of functions or uses begins in the personal or expressive use of language and moves on to the transactional (to convey information) on the one hand, and on to the poetic use (writing as an art form) on the other hand.

In terms of Britton's scheme, Expressive writing is personal, intimate, and close to speech. Like speech, it reveals the flow of ideas, feelings and imaginings, shifting direction at will and making the demands of audience felt least. It is writing in which the writer reveals himself and his innermost thoughts to the reader. It is the writer, rather than the content, that is of interest to the reader.

The Expressive is the mode in which we learn. It helps us make links between old Knowledge and new information. The expressive is central to both learning to write and writing to learn. It is the language in which we come to terms with new information. It is, also, the soil in which different and more specialized kinds of writing can grow.

Transactional writing, on the other hand, is more public, explicit, and precise. It is the language of business, technology, and public affairs. It is often language used to persuade, advise, inform, admonish, report, plan, argue, or theorize. It is the language of textbooks.

In transactional writing, the reader is more interested in the content than in the writer.

By insisting too early on the use of impersonal, unexpressive, transactional writing, we can harm learning. Transactional language tends to alienate the learner's own experience and separates it from new knowledge. In the words of John Dixon's famous dictum: "They gaze at Knowledge across a chasm!"

In Poetic writing, the writer provides a subjective picture filled with experiences, thoughts, and feelings that are uniquely the writer's own. The reader shares the writer's experience through the conscious shaping of an artistic verbal construct - a poem, short story, etc. In poetic writing it is the artistic experience that is important.

In poetic writing the writer discovers the importance of self and gains new perceptions.

James Moffett (1968) begins his schema with dramatic improvisation in order to develop a sense of audience in writers. He moves on to writing about oneself as "a spectator of one's own experiences". This kind of writing includes sensory recordings, memoirs, diaries, personal letters, and so on. At the next level, Moffett suggests writing about others: reports, interviews, observations, profiles, case reports.

Both Britton and Moffett suggest a progression in levels of abstraction from writing about oneself to the kinds of writing which reflects, generalizes, and theorizes.

Achieving writing competence in a school depends largely upon the commitment of the entire staff to use writing not merely for testing but often and with purpose as a learning tool in all subject areas.

Those who teach writing should see growth in terms of the many uses of writing, personal, social, and academic, addressed to different kinds of audiences. They should be aware of the intellectual and language challenges brought about by the relationships between writer and audience and writer and topic. They should base their methodology on a teaching model, a framework supported by sound theory and research rather then rely on mechanical copying of models, dry re-runs, gimmicks, or set formulae.

CHAPTER 2

Purposes and Procedures of the Test

The Final Report of the 1988 Provincial Writing Assessment contains an overview of the purposes and procedures, and a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Writing Assessment 1988.

Purpose

The 1988 tests were designed primarily to supply systematic data on the writing competence of students, to survey a broad range of skills and to produce a descriptive picture of school writing in Manitoba. Pursuant to this purpose, the data obtained on the writing tests were supplemented by further information gained from the comments of markers and from responses to a teachers' questionnaire about the context of instruction; the conditions under which students write and are taught writing, and the extent to which the tasks assigned are appropriate and productive.

Its purpose was threefold:

(i) to describe the state of school writing;
(ii) to monitor curriculum development; and
(iii) to provide a basis for comparing past and future writing skills.

Test Construction and Scoring

In September, 1987 a Technical Advisory Committee was struck to determine the aspects of writing which were to be tested, and to decide upon the scoring process and the analysis of data. The Committee consisted of teachers drawn from different parts of the Province (urban, rural, and Northern) and representative of the three grades to be tested.

The Committee reviewed and selected the forms of writing for the test appropriate to each of the three grade levels. It established, by consensus, the levels of expected performance. It decided upon an holistic evaluation of the written products. For the purpose of describing student performance more precisely, it was thought necessary to specify competence in terms of those aspects of writing common to all prose. These aspects, ideas, structure, style and mechanics, were adapted and arranged as nine qualities essential to school writing. Each quality was defined and the expected performance was scored by markers on a six-point scale, which was later collapsed to a 3-point scale for ease of analysis.

Furthermore, the committee decided upon a coherent approach for evaluating the written products of the test. This approach had to be consistent with the integrated and developmental nature of the English Language Arts program.

To achieve consistency with the program, the evaluation procedures used on the test would have to be applicable to all grades. The procedures would have to take into account the various contexts and purposes for which writing is used in schools. Finally, it would have to encourage markers to look beyond the surface features of writing and observe how students cope with meaning and increasing levels of abstraction (Moffett, 1971).

James Britton (1970) described two such dimensions of writing for meaning that cut across the various contexts, genres, and grades; one dimension is related to audience and the other to function, use, or purpose.

Michael Halliday (1977), also, encouraged a look at language use at the level of the text as a whole. According to Halliday, writing should be seen as a continuous process of choices made from sets of semantic options. The effectiveness of each piece of writing as communication is the result of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the choice. Different elements or aspects of writing contribute to the total meaning of the piece.

The elements or aspects decided upon for purposes of the writing test were: Organization and Sequence, Wording/Style, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Spelling.

A further consideration in constructing the test was the need, within the limits of the test, to mirror procedures recommended in the English Language Arts program for developing writing skills. These procedures provided for such pre- and post-writing activities as peer discussion, rough drafts, editing, revising, and re-writing.

The validity of the holistic approach to evaluation and the concern about observing an enabling context and suitable strategies during testing are endorsed by such authorities of school writing as the primary school researcher, Donald Graves, (1983) and the senior school researcher, Janet Emig (1971).

The Technical Advisory Committee decided that two written tasks appropriate to age and grade would be chosen for each grade.

Separate spelling tests would be administered to grades 8 and 11.

In grade 4 the two tasks were Story Writing and Report Writing. In the first task students had to construct a story around the finding of a box on the way to school. The second task, Report Writing, required them to write a report on an animal. The report was based on research done previously.

In grade 8 the test consisted of two tasks and a spelling test of 24 words. The first assignment, Persuasive Writing, required students to take and maintain a position for or against one of six statements. The second task, Narrative Writing, required them to write a story set in one of four different time periods.

Grade 11 students were assigned two writing tasks and a spelling test of twenty words. The first task, Process Writing, required students to explain how something was done or organized. The second assignment, Essay Writing, asked students to respond to a newspaper article by writing a personal opinion essay.

Pilot tests were conducted in several schools and revisions to the tests were undertaken as a result of the pilot experience.

Marking Procedures

The same marking procedures were followed at each grade level.

The written products were marked holistically and evaluated on two types of scales: a General Impression Marking Scale and nine Analytic Scales.

Each student paper was assigned ten different scores.

A General Impression Marking Scale (G.I.M.) provided a single score for each piece of writing, while the Analytic Marking Scales provided nine scores, one for each important aspect of writing identified for evaluation. These aspects or elements are: Organization and Sequence, Word Choice, Focus or Theme, Choice of Detail or Elaboration, Sentence Structure, Usage, Ideas, Punctuation and Capitals, and Spelling.

The General Impression Marking Scale (G.I.M.)

General Impression Marking provided a single impressionistic score awarded by markers who had been carefully trained and practiced to assure reliability.

After the first reading, the markers decided where the paper fitted within a range of test papers ordered from the best paper to the poorest according to scales and scores indicated below:

5 or 6 - High
3 or 4 - Middle
1 or 2 - Low
0 - Insufficient Material

The markers focused their attention on the message as a whole. No particular quality or detailed feature such as spelling or syntax, was allowed to constitute the whole score. The markers were concerned with more general or global criteria such as the quality of thought, the overall shaping of the presentation, and the general control of language evident in the writing. They took into account the requirements of the assignment, the maturity of the students, and the expected levels of performance for the grade.

If the scores of the two markers did not differ by more than one point, the two scores were added together to give the final G.I.M. score.

If the scores of the two markers did differ by more than one point, the paper was read for a third time by an adjudicator. In adjudicated cases, the final G.I.M. score was obtained by applying the following rules:

(i) If the adjudicator's rating was midway between the two ratings, then the adjudicator's score was added to the average of the first two scores.

(ii) Otherwise, the adjudicator's score was added to the closer of the two scores.

The two scores of the markers were combined to obtain a final G.I.M. score of 0 to 12.

Analytic Marking Scales

Analytic Marking Scales were used to assess the nine qualities or aspects considered essential to school writing. These qualities are Organization and Sequence, Word Choice, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitals, and Spelling.

The holistic nature of the marking allowed the markers to maintain a focus on the central meaning of the written product while observing the way the parts related to one another; thus they were able to rate the different aspects of writing. The student's writing was seen as the result of a continuous process of choice among organizational and stylistic options made during the three stages of writing. By comparing first and final drafts, markers were able to observe at which writing stage the fine-tuning to audience and purpose had occurred.

The markers were all experienced teachers who were carefully trained in these forms of holistic marking. Their knowledge of the classroom enabled the assessment to present a picture of current practice and a valid normative measure of student writing performance.

The Teacher Questionnaire

The Teacher Questionnaire was undertaken to obtain more information about the processes and strategies used in Manitoba schools to generate writing.

Information on the following aspects and activities was requested:-

(i) the frequency and nature of pre-writing and post-writing activities;
(ii) the sources for generating topics;
(iii) the different purposes for writing;
(iv) the different audiences addressed;
(v) the use of conferencing;
(vi) provisions for sharing of the written products;
(vii) the use of folders; and
(viii) writing across the curriculum.

Markers' Comments

The markers' comments, collected at the time of marking, proved to be an invaluable help in forming judgments, and, when appropriate, were incorporated in the interpretations.

Comparison Testing

To facilitate a comparison of the writing of 1988 students with the writing of 1982 students, the 1982 Writing Assessment tests were re-administered to a random sample of approximately 100 students at each of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. Also, approximately 60, randomly selected papers at each of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 from the 1982 assessment had been retained. These two sets of papers were mixed together and marked by common markers using the procedures outlined above.

Results

The results for grades 4, 8, and 11 are reported separately for each grade level.

The method of reporting for each grade will include:

(i) An outline of the writing test for each grade;
(ii) The General Impression Marking Scale and the Analytic Scale scores presented in tabular form;
(iii) A review of some of the main points of writing growth which are reflected in the General Impression Marking scores;
(iv) The criteria that determined the evaluation of the nine essential qualities of writing;
(v) An interpretation of the results; and
(vi) A summary of the results and of the interpretation of these results for each grade.

For all three levels, the tables giving the results are presented in four columns - low, middle, high, mean. Each of the first three columns represents the percentage of students scoring in these areas, i.e.,

high	-	5 - 6
middle	-	3 - 4
low	-	1 - 2.

The mean for the GIM represents a score on 12, while the mean for the other qualities represents a score on 6.

CHAPTER 3

Grade 4 Results

In the grade 4 test two written products, Story Writing and Report Writing, were assessed.

In the first task, Story Writing, students were presented with a starting idea: **"As I left home one morning for school I found a box"**.

Following a ten-minute discussion in groups, students wrote a rough draft. The following day, they revised, edited, and re-wrote their stories.

Prior to the second task, Report Writing, students were encouraged to do research on an animal of their choice. The writing assignment required them to prepare a report for someone who knew nothing about the animal. The report was to include information about appearance, habitat, eating habits, and unusual or interesting features.

Both pieces of writing were marked, first, on a General Impressing Marking Scale and then marked according to nine Analytic Marking Scales by carefully trained markers who were also experienced teachers at grade 4 level.

STORY WRITING

	Low	Middle	High	Mean
GIM	20.3%	67.5%	12.2%	6.05
1. Organization and Sequence	27.2	62.7	10.1	3.13
2. Wording and Style	25.5	62.9	11.6	3.13
3. Focus or Theme	27.2	61.5	11.3	3.18
4. Ideas	34.5	56.9	8.6	2.97
5. Detail/Elaboration	43.0	49.7	7.3	2.78
6. Sentence Structure	33.6	54.0	12.4	3.03
7. Usage	23.6	54.6	21.8	3.42
8. Punctuation/Capitals	24.0	46.7	29.3	3.54
9. Spelling	24.4	42.0	33.6	3.63

REPORT WRITING

	Low	Middle	High	Mean
GIM	25.9%	58.5%	15.6%	5.94
1. Organization and Sequence	34.9	55.2	9.9	2.95
2. Wording and Style	25.5	61.7	12.8	3.17
3. Focus or Theme	18.4	62.3	19.3	3.41
4. Ideas	31.7	55.0	13.3	3.03
5. Detail/Elaboration	42.6	45.2	12.2	2.85
6. Sentence Structure	23.6	63.1	13.3	3.20
7. Usage	23.1	53.3	23.6	3.44
8. Punctuation/Capitals	16.1	46.6	37.3	3.80
9. Spelling	23.3	43.1	33.6	3.66

NOTE: Number of students tested = 467

General Impression Marking

The GIM Scale attempts to rate compositions in a general global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice. Both tasks, story writing and report writing, were rated twice on a scale of 0 - 6 by two different markers. The two scores were then combined for a score on a scale of 0-12.

Samples scoring in the high range had evidence of the following qualities:

High (5-6)

In this range, in story writing the paper has evidence of sound thinking on the part of the writer, that is, above what would be normally expected at this grade level. The quality of thought reflects a developmentally mature point of view. The paper is not overly egocentric or narrow in perspective. The organization of the paper indicates careful planning, with an idea or event following logically from the preceding one. The paper is presented in an effective fashion, and it follows the organization such that the reader has no difficulty in following the sequence of ideas or events. The style is appropriate to the level of thought. Word choice, and word use reflect a grasp of language that is above average. The level of the paper is appropriate for the audience being addressed and fulfills the stated purpose.

For report writing the reader would expect to find a wealth of information on the chosen topic. Paragraphing should be used effectively as an organizational tool and the use of descriptive words should be above average. The writer must be able to write opening and closing paragraphs that are effective. The usage must be appropriate to the level of presentation and spelling attracts little or no attention.

Samples scoring in the middle range evidenced the following characteristics:

Middle (3-4)

In the middle range the paper had evidence of thinking on the part of the writer that is appropriate to the grade level of the student. The quality of thought reflects what would be expected at this age. In the case of story writing, although the paper is essentially egocentric in perspective, this does not interfere with the overall movement and organization of the paper. The paper is obviously planned though at times the writer may wander from the central thrust. The ideas or events are generally sequenced in a meaningful fashion: the style is generally clear and word choice and use reflect a grasp of language that would be expected at this grade level. The level of the paper may not, for the most part, take into account the audience being addressed, but, in general, it fulfills the purpose of the paper.

In the case of report writing, a paper in this range would have evidence of a quantity of information on the chosen topic, although, it is expected details may not be as abundant or as specific to the particular chosen topic as in the high range. Paragraphing should be used as an organizational tool even if not always correctly used. Sentences should be well constructed but may lack variety, and spelling and usage should be acceptable for this grade level.

Samples scoring in the low range evidenced the following characteristics:

Low (1-2)

For this category, the quality of thought evident in the story writing is obviously immature and below what is expected at grade level. The point of view is egocentric to the point that it interferes with the relating of ideas and events. The organization in the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect any careful planning. Ideas and events do not follow each other logically or sequentially. The movement of the paper is interrupted by wandering thoughts and events or inappropriate information. The style is inconsistent and immature, with many repetitions. Word choice is unclear, inappropriate, and distracting. The writer seems to have no awareness of the audience or reader and seems to have no purpose in writing the paper.

A report in this range would reveal minimal knowledge of the subject, with few details. No attempt is made to catch the reader's attention in the opening, and there is no feeling of ending or closure. The vocabulary is limited, colourless, and does not aid description. Ideas are not presented in a logical or in an interesting way. Spelling and usage detract from the readability and general expression of the paper.

Results

Story Writing			Report Writing		
High	(9-12)	12.2%	High	(9-12)	15.6%
Medium	(5-8)	67.5%	Medium	(5-8)	58.5%
Low	(0-4)	20.3%	Low	(0-4)	25.9%
Mean		6.05	Mean		5.94

In story writing, 79.7% scored in the middle and high range. In report writing 74.1% of the students scored in the middle and high ranges.

The results of the GIM show that a reasonable percentage of the grade 4 students present a paper, either in report or story writing, where the quality of thought and expression is appropriate for the situation. In general the organization and presentation of these papers demonstrated a performance that was appropriate for a grade 4 student. However, the results also indicate that 20.3% of students in story writing, and 25.9% of students in report writing presented papers that were considered immature for the grade level. Of these, 0.4% in story writing, and 2.1% in report writing were too limited in material to be scored.

STORY WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

Generally the organization should follow a sequence of events. The paper should effectively introduce the situation in general, lead the reader clearly through the sequence of events, and come to closure. The writer should effectively introduce the setting and characters and build from this introduction. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in understanding the series of events.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- effective opening that catches the reader's interest
- clearly follows a sequence of events
- effective transitions from one event to another
- effective closing
- understandable conclusion

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally introduces the story
- does not capture the reader's interest
- has no necessary background or explanation of the story
- events are appropriately described, but not clearly laid out
- may not have used effective transitions
- may have a weak ending
- little or no sense of closure

LOW (1 OR 2)
- opening does not catch the interest of the reader
- necessary background is lacking
- sequence of events is confusing, left out, or inappropriately ordered
- no transition phrases
- reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness
- story may leave the reader confused about what really happened
- confusion about the importance of events or the characters

Results

10.1% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
62.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
27.2% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.13

Seventy-two point eight percent (72.8%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a satisfactory performance in this area with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

The students in middle and low ranges had some idea of beginning, middle, and end. Many of the opening paragraphs, although introducing the story adequately, were not effective in catching the interest of the reader. In many cases the events were appropriately described, but the sequence of events was confusing or inappropriately ordered with little use of effective transitions. Necessary background information was often lacking. There were

a few good surprise endings, but very often the conclusion left the reader with little or no feeling of closure or completeness. However, these scores suggest that many of these writers have some sense of organization even if it is underdeveloped.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Word choice refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in writing the story and how the writer strings those words together into phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of the audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The words and the ways in which they are strung together should be clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- reflects sensitivity to the audience
- words are precise and exact
- interesting style
- unusual or interesting words are used appropriately
- words help the reader clearly see and understand the story

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- words have appropriate referent but do not reflect a sensitivity to reader
- vocabulary is too general though correctly used

LOW (1 OR 2)
- words do not aid the reader in understanding the story and may interfere with comprehension
- words are colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting

Results

11.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
62.9% scored in the middle range (3-4)
25.5% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.13

Seventy-four point five percent (74.5%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a satisfactory performance in this area, with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

Except for students scoring in the high range, choice of vocabulary was rather weak. Many of the students scoring in the middle range and for those in the low range, although oftentimes words were correctly used, much of the vocabulary was too general in nature for this type of writing. There was an overuse of non-specific words such as "interesting", "good" and very few synonyms were present. Words and style seemed colourless, non-engaging, and uninteresting.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the story's elements together.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- central focus for the story
- develops elements so they directly relate to the central focus
- story focus is clearly discernible
- events have been sufficiently covered at the conclusion
- no unrelated details are included

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- central focus exists but elements are not clearly related to focus
- the purpose is not clearly identifiable
- at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central focus
- intrusions do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement
- at the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered but that the movement of the story has been interrupted

LOW (1 OR 2)
- story has no central focus or thematic movement
- unrelated information, opinions, and details seem to be added
- at the conclusion, the reader is likely to question the main point or purpose of the story

Results

11.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
61.5% were in the middle range (3-4)
27.2% in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.18

Seventy-two point eight percent (72.8%) of the students scored in the high and middle range. This would indicate that in this area many students are performing at a satisfactory level but there is need for improvement.

Interpretation

Seventy-two point eight percent (72.8%) of the papers read were in the middle to high range where the focus or theme was concerned. In this area some weaknesses were apparent. At times the writer would interject information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central theme with little concern as to how they related to the events. It was also noted that quite a few story writers interrupted the flow of their story and got lost in their fantasy either unconsciously or because they wanted to add to the length of their story.

4. IDEAS

In the story, the basic idea was given. It was **"As I left home one morning for school I found a box.**

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- appropriate and meaningful ideas
- deals with the topic in a unique, creative fashion
- humour, interesting figures of speech or the like are used
- interesting point of view

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally sound
- does not reflect a unique or creative point of view
- no attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, or comparisons

LOW (1 OR 2)
- ideas do not reflect sound or creative thinking
- story is lifeless - ideas do not congeal as a whole
- writing reflects mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking

Results

8.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
56.9% scored in the middle range (3-4)
34.5% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 2.97

Sixty-five point five percent (65.5%) of the students scored in the high and middle range indicating that this is an area needing improvement.

Interpretation

This is a weaker area. Only 8.6% of the students scored in the high range and presented their story in a manner reflecting sound or creative thinking. This seems to suggest that many of these writers need more help in developing unique and creative points of view.

These characteristics of writing will most benefit from classroom strategies that foster the development of ideas and vocabulary and promote organization and sentence variety on a regular basis, e.g., discussions, brainstorming, mapping/webbing, sentence manipulation. Research skills, organization and presentation techniques, and strategies to develop a theme, would benefit from instruction received and points to the need to maintain or implement the "writing process" in all schools.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a story have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- details are appropriate to the telling of the story
- story is elaborated and interesting to the reader without getting carried away
- words, phrases, imagery, and figures of speech make the events real and clear to the reader

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- details chosen seem appropriate but the story, at times, seems to lack life
- elaboration may not be clear to the reader
- story is adequately described

LOW (1 OR 2)
- details do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the story
- writer has not appropriately elaborated the story and the writing is lifeless

Results

7.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
49.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
43.0% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 2.78

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges indicating that this is an area needing improvement.

Interpretation

Choice of details and elaboration of ideas present difficulties for these students. Only 7.3% of the writers placed in the high range. Many of the middle and low range papers were lifeless. Although, in many cases the details chosen were appropriate to the story, often the writing was uninteresting to the reader. In other cases, the lack of details did not allow the writing to come to life.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- positive effect is created in the use of sentence structures
- writer has control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- writer has control of a number of sentence structures but at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy

LOW (1 OR 2)
- little more than simple sentences
- a small number of structures are repeated
- paper is boring or predictable
- writer has serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences

Results

12.4% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
54.0% scored in the middle range (3-4)
33.6% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.03

Sixty-six point four percent (66.4%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges indicating that this is an area needing improvement.

Interpretation

In this area 12.4% of the students obtained scores in the high range which indicates that these writers have control of a variety of sentence structures and employ them effectively. Students scoring at the lower end of the middle range (scores of 3) and those scoring in the low range presented papers in which sentence structures were little more than simple sentences, with the subject/verb kind being prevalent and with a lack of sentences containing subordinate or dependent clauses. Where an attempt was made at using a more complex form, the run-on sentence became the norm and a lack of proper transition words was observed. Conjunctions such as "but, "and", "so" were often used at the beginning of sentences.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- the usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper

Results

21.8% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
54.6% scored in the middle range (3-4)
23.6% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.42

Seventy-six point four percent (76.4%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the students' performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

Twenty-one point eight percent (21.8%) of the students scored in the high range in the area of usage. This high figure indicates that these students are performing above grade level in this area. Another 54.6% placed in the middle range indicating that these writers were performing at the level expected by the markers. Usage errors that were present did not detract from the impact of the discourse. Some errors occurred more frequently than one would expect , e.g., incorrect use of its and it's; there-their; and difficulties with subject-verb agreement.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- in general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly
- capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

Results

29.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
46.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
24.0% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean of 3.54

Seventy-six percent (76.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the students' performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

With regard to the use of punctuation and capitals, 76% of students performed at or above grade level expectations. In general, the errors that were present did not perceptibly detract from the clarity and readability of the paper, and many of those observed were expected at this stage. The word "I" was often written "i", but the period and question mark were generally used correctly; a lack of commas separating words in a list was evident. Some attempt was made to use quotation marks.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- spelling attracts little or no attention
- when errors in words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the possible spelling

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper
- most "guesses" are reasonable

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors in spelling detract substantially from the readability and impression of the paper
- the reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended

Results

33.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
42.0% scored in the middle range (3-4)
24.4% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 2.63

Seventy-five point six percent (75.6%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates that students' performance in this area is satisfactory with 33.6% performing above grade level.

Interpretation

Spelling scores indicate that a relatively high percentage (33.6%) of students scored in the high range. In most cases the spelling errors that appeared in the writing did not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. In fact, it was felt that most basic spelling words appropriate to a grade 4 level were already well in place. Where spelling errors appeared, they were predictable for students at this level.

REPORT WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

In report writing the organization of detail should be clear and arranged according to the sub-topic. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in thinking about and understanding the topic.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- effective opening that catches the interest of the reader
- sub-topic details are arranged in paragraphs
- effective closing that tells the reader that the report is finished

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- attempts an opening but does not catch the interest of the reader
- sub-topic details are generally accurate and grouped appropriately but not always paragraphed
- weak ending, no sense of closure

LOW (1 OR 2)
- no attempt to catch the reader's attention in the opening
- sub-topic details are not always accurate and are ordered inappropriately
- no feeling of ending or closure

Results

9.9% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
55.2% scored in the middle range (3-4)
34.9% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 2.95

Sixty-five point one percent (65.1%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a need for improvement in this area.

Interpretation

Students scoring in the high range had a good sense of organization and sequence. In the papers scoring in the middle and low ranges, the students' writings revealed some knowledge and application of introduction and conclusion although in many cases these two elements were rather weak. Very often the opening was not effective, and one was left with no sense of closure. Paragraphing was usually present, although sub-topic details were not always ordered appropriately. Many students had difficulty with introductory and concluding sentences.

2. WORDING/STYLE

Word choice refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in writing the story and how the writer strings those words together into phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. In report writing, the vocabulary should be precise and topic-related (appropriate). The words and ways in which they are strung together should be clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- wide choice of descriptive words is used to create the image for the reader

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- limited choice of descriptive words, some repetition
- vocabulary may be too general

LOW (1 OR 2)

- vocabulary is very limited, colourless, does not aid description

Results

12.8% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
61.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
25.5% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.17

Seventy-four point five percent (74.5%) scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates a satisfactory performance by the students in this area with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

Twelve point eight percent (12.8%) of the writers scored in the high range where one observed an appropriate choice of descriptive words. For those in the middle range, the vocabulary tended to be vague and somewhat inaccurate. Few descriptive words were used and because of a lack of alternative words or synonyms, there was much repetition. Students scoring in the low range showed evidence of very limited word choice and frequently used words inappropriately.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the elements of the report together.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- central focus for the report is present
- develops elements so they directly relate to the central focus
- story focus is clearly discernible
- events have been sufficiently covered at the conclusion
- no unrelated details are included

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- central focus exists but elements are not clearly related to focus
- the purpose is not clearly identifiable
- at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central focus
- intrusions do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement
- at the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered but that the movement of the report has been interrupted

LOW (1 OR 2)

- report has no central focus or thematic movement
- unrelated information, opinions, and details seem to be added
- at the conclusion, the reader is likely to question the main point or purpose of the report

Results

19.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
62.3% scored in the middle range (3-4)
18.4% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.41

Eighty-one point six percent (81.6%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate that in this area the students are performing at a relatively strong level.

Interpretation

The scores on focus show that, in general, the students performed better on report writing in this area than they did in story writing. In 81.6% of the papers, the central focus was evident throughout, while 18.4% of the students experienced difficulty in maintaining the focus. It was evident, in several cases, that the writer found it easier to stick to the theme when writing a piece of non-fiction which he/she had researched than to do the same in the narrative task.

4. IDEAS

In the report writing task the basic idea was given. The student was asked to write a report on an animal of his choice.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- appropriate and meaningful development of basic idea
- dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion
- humour, interesting figures of speech or the like are used
- interesting point of view

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally sound development of the idea
- does not reflect a unique or creative point of view
- no attempt has been made to employ, humour, interesting figures of speech or comparisons

LOW (1 OR 2)
- development of the idea does not reflect sound or creative thinking
- report is lifeless - ideas do not congeal as a whole
- reflects mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking

Results

13.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
55.0% scored in the middle range (3-4)
31.7% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.03

Sixty-eight point three percent (68.3%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges indicating a need for improvement.

Interpretation

In the area of ideas, 13.3% of the students dealt with the basic idea in a creative and interesting way. Another 55.0% were able to present a report that developed the subject in an appropriate and meaningful fashion, whereas, the other 31.7% found it difficult to deal with the subject in a lively, descriptive style. This would suggest that students would benefit from greater involvement in activities such as brainstorming, discussing, role-playing, dramatization which stimulate the imagination and help to generate ideas.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- reveals a wide knowledge of the subject shown by use of many details
- details are chosen to be of interest to the reader
- description is alive, real to the reader, and is clear

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- displays adequate knowledge of the subject but rich detail lacking
- the writing seems to lack life

LOW (1 OR 2)

- minimal knowledge of the subject, few details

Results

12.2% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
45.2% scored in the middle range (3-4)
42.6% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 2.85

Fifty-seven point four percent (57.4%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This would indicate that this is an area where students are weak and need improvement.

Interpretation

The scores on choice of details and elaboration of ideas are consistent with the scores on the previous scale, ideas. Fifty-seven point four percent (57.4%) of the writers provided an adequate to excellent elaboration of their ideas with 12.2% of them showing that they had a wide knowledge of the animal chosen by the amount of details they shared with the reader in a lively, descriptive style. Forty-two point six percent (42.6%) of the students showed a minimal knowledge of their subject as evidenced by the lack of details provided even though they had been given an opportunity to research their topic prior to writing.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- positive effect is created in the use of sentence structures
- writer has control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- writer has control of a number of sentence structures but at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy

LOW (1 OR 2)

- little more than simple sentences
- a small number of structures are repeated
- paper is boring or predictable
- writer has serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences

Results

13.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
63.1% scored in the middle range (3-4)
23.6% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.2

Seventy-six point four percent (76.4%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This score, although satisfactory, indicates that the students would need some improvement in this area.

Interpretation

Students' papers in the high range (13.3%) showed evidence of a variety of sentences: simple, complex, inverted, exclamatory, and so on. In the middle range (63.1%) less complex sentences were present; sentences were shorter and of simpler structure, but in most cases they were effectively constructed. In the low range (23.6%), little more than simple sentences were used and run-on or incomplete sentences were repeatedly observed.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- the usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper

Results

23.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
53.3% scored in the middle range (3-4)
23.1% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.44

Seventy-six point nine percent (76.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates satisfactory performance in this area with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

As in story writing, many students performed at the expected level in the area of usage in report writing. In 76.9% of the papers, usage was correct and appropriate for the level of presentation and errors did not detract from the impact of the report. Nevertheless, difficulties were found in:
- subject/verb agreement, e.g., "elephant weigh a lot",
- verb tense and pronoun reference especially when there was a change in paragraphing,
- the misuse or lack of apostrophe in contractions.

Most of these difficulties were present in the writing of the 23.1% of papers scoring in the low range.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- in general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly
- capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

LOW (1 OR 2)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

Results

37.3% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
46.6% scored in the middle range (3-4)
16.1% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.80

Eighty-three point nine percent (83.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

Punctuation and the use of capitals appear as a strength for these students with 83.9% of them performing in the middle to high range. It would appear that students have less difficulty with punctuation and capitalization in report writing than in narrative writing.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- spelling attracts little or no attention
- if errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the spelling of the words being used

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper
- most "guesses" are reasonable

LOW (1 OR 2)

- errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper
- the reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended

Results

33.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
43.1% scored in the middle range (3-4)
23.3% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.66

Seventy-six point seven percent (76.7%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates students' performance is satisfactory in this area with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

Many students appear to be relatively strong in spelling with 33.6% of them scoring in the high range. It was recognized that the spelling of basic words had been mastered by most students. Spelling scores in report writing are very similar to those reported for narrative writing.

Summary of Grade 4 Results

General Impression Marking Scale

Story Writing

467	stories were evaluated.
6.05	was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
79.7%	of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
12.2%	of these scored between 9 and 12.
20.3%	of the papers were rated within the low range (0-4).
0.4%	of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Report Writing

467	reports were evaluated.
5.94	was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
74.1%	of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
15.6%	of these scored between 9 and 12.
25.9%	of the papers were rated within the low range (0-4).
2.1%	of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Analytic Scales (mean scores in brackets)

Story Writing

On the Analytic scoring out of a possible maximum of 6, the highest performance marks were obtained in Spelling (3.63), Punctuation and Capitalization (3.54) and in Usage (3.42) with 75.6%, 76.1%, and 76.4% of all students respectively scoring in the middle and high range, between 3 and 6.

The lowest performances were in Ideas (2.97) and in the Choice of Details and Elaboration of Ideas (2.78). In Ideas 34.4% of the students and in Choice of Details and Elaboration, 43% of the students performed within the low range scoring between 0 and 2.

In the remaining qualities, the majority of students were rated at the middle level of performance, 3 or 4 out of the possible maximum of 6. Of the total, 62.7% of students attained this middle rating in Organization and Sequence, 62.9% for Word Choice and 61.5% for Focus or Theme.

Only 0.6% scored 0.

Report Writing

The Analytic marking revealed that the highest mean performance scores in Report Writing were in Spelling (3.66), in Punctuation and Capitals (3.80), Usage (3.44), and in Focus and Theme (3.41).

Of the total, 76.6% of the students scored within the middle and high range of performance in Spelling, 83.9% in Punctuation and Capitals, 76.8% in Usage, and 81.0% in Focus or Theme.

The lowest mean performance scores were in Ideas (3.03), Choice of Details/ Elaboration (2.85) and in Organization and Sequence (2.95). In these three areas the percentage of students rated as performing at low levels were: 31.6% in Ideas, 42.6% in Choice of Details/Elaboration, 34.9% in Organization and Sequence.

The remaining two qualities of writing, Word Choice and Sentence Structure, have performance means of (3.17) and (3.20) respectively, while in Word Choice 74.5% of students and in Sentence Structure 76.5% of students were performing at middle and high levels.

Interpretation of Grade 4 Results

This test attempts to measure the overall progress students have made in writing in their first four years of schooling.

The results show that commendable attention is being given in schools to the mechanics of Spelling, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Usage. In these areas students have scored well within and above the levels of performance expected for the grade.

In both writing tasks, however, low scores were recorded for such important elements of the composing process as Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, and Organization and Sequence. While there were many notable exceptions, most papers were flawed by the apparent failure to generate interesting ideas or to expand ideas through personal insights, experiences, examples, and comparisons and to marshal ideas effectively and bring them to a plausible conclusion.

Since most of the writing done in grade 4 is narrative in form, students did better in Story Writing (6.05) than in Report Writing (5.94).

Many papers indicate that there may have been too little practice in Report writing, a most functional and relevant form of school writing.

The larger number of very competent Report writers in the high level (15.6%) as compared with the very competent Story writers (12.2%) at the same level would appear to indicate that where Report writing had been taught, students acquitted themselves well.

CHAPTER 4

Grade 8 Results

A. The grade 8 test was composed of three parts:

PART I - Persuasive Writing (Personal Opinion)
PART II - Narrative Writing
PART III - Spelling Dictation

PART I: In Persuasive Writing students were asked to take a position for or against an issue and to convince the reader to accept the writer's viewpoint.

There were two sessions set aside for this test. The first session allowed the student 10 minutes to decide upon a position: 10 minutes to share ideas with a partner; and 25 minutes to write a rough draft.

The second session of 50 minutes was to be spent in revising, editing, proofreading, and rewriting the final draft.

PART II: In Narrative Writing the student had to construct a story set in one of four time periods. The story begins as the writer leaves a time machine.

Two sessions were set aside for PART II. The first session (45 minutes) allowed time for the preparation of a rough draft. The second session (50 minutes) was to be used for revising, editing, proofreading, and re-writing the final draft.

PART III: The Spelling test comprised a list of 24 selected words.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

GIM	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
	23.8%	56.5%	19.7%	6.28
1. Organization and Sequence	30.6	55.4	14.0	3.12
2. Wording and Style	24.4	66.7	8.7	3.14
3. Focus or Theme	25.9	60.9	13.2	3.18
4. Ideas	40.8	49.6	9.6	2.87
5. Detail/Elaboration	46.1	44.1	9.8	2.72
6. Sentence Structure	30.1	59.5	10.4	3.09
7. Usage	26.8	62.4	10.8	3.16
8. Punctuation/Capitals	19.5	63.1	17.4	3.41
9. Spelling	13.8	65.8	20.4	3.57

NARRATIVE WRITING

GIM	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
	20.6%	56.3%	23.1%	6.55
1. Organization and Sequence	22.5	57.5	20.0	3.35
2. Wording and Style	23.4	60.0	16.6	3.31
3. Focus or Theme	27.0	52.8	20.2	3.36
4. Ideas	30.1	52.7	17.2	3.21
5. Detail/Elaboration	35.5	49.0	15.5	3.07
6. Sentence Structure	31.2	52.0	16.8	3.18
7. Usage	22.3	61.4	16.3	3.34
8. Punctuation/Capitals	23.1	51.8	25.1	3.50
9. Spelling	15.7	58.2	26.1	3.66

NOTE: Number of students tested = 471

General Impression Marking

General Impression Marking is a judgment about the overall quality of the student's writing given the purpose of the writing and the audience to which it is addressed. It attempts to rate compositions in a general, global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall organization, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice. Evaluation of specific attributes of writing are left to the analytic marking scales.

Both tasks, persuasive writing and narrative writing were rated twice on a scale of 0-6 by two different markers (0's were assigned if there was insufficient material to rate). The two scores were then combined for a score on a 0-12 scale.

The samples which scored in the high range showed evidence of the following characteristics:

High (5-6)

These papers had evidence of sound thinking reflecting a mature point of view. Careful planning was apparent in the organization, and the style was appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper. The word choice in these papers reflected a mature grasp of language and language use. The audience had been identified as the student's classmates, and the level of the paper was appropriate for the audience being addressed.

The samples which scored in the middle range denoted the following qualities:

Middle (3-4)

In this category students' writings are judged to be appropriate to their grade level but reflect a level of maturity less than adult-like. The organization of the paper is generally appropriate, though the writer might have been more careful in planning or carrying out the organizational pattern. At times the paper may wander from the central thrust or movement. The style may reflect inconsistencies or repetitions that are distracting. Word choice is indicative of the maturity of the student. In general, the paper achieves its identified purpose, but it may wander or not take advantage of obvious opportunities in achieving that purpose.

Low (1-2)

In this range, the thinking that is evident in the paper seems immature and inconsistent, reflecting an identifiably egocentric point of view. The organization of the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect careful planning. Wandering discourse, inappropriate information interrupt the thrust and movement of the paper: the style is of varying consistency with many repetitive and uninteresting structures. Word choice is unsuitable and shallow. The writer seems to have little consideration for the reader and does not consistently address the identified purpose of the paper.

Results on a scale of 0-12

Persuasive Writing			Narrative Writing		
High	(9 - 12)	19.7%	High	(9 - 12)	23.1%
Middle	(5 - 8)	56.5%	Middle	(5 - 8)	56.3%
Low	(0 - 4)	23.8%	Low	(0 - 4)	20.6%
Mean		6.28	Mean		6.55

In persuasive writing 76.2% of students scored in the middle and high ranges. In narrative writing 79.4% of the students scored in the middle and high ranges.

These results indicate that an acceptable percentage of the grade 8 students present a paper in both genres of writing where the quality of thought and expression is appropriate for the grade level. In all aspects of organization and presentation, a good percentage of papers demonstrated performance that was acceptable for a grade 8 student. It was felt that these students had a general awareness of the qualities and attributes particular to the two tasks.

Persuasive Writing

In this task, the writer was asked to take a position for or against an issue and to write in order to convince the reader.

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE (for personal opinion essay)

In personal opinion writing, the organization should follow a logical, usually causal, sequence. The essay should indicate that the topic has been effectively introduced, the major points should follow one another logically, and the paper should come to an effective conclusion. Organization and sequence is probably most evident in the major topics and in the concluding paragraph.

HIGH (5 OR 6):
The writer has written an effective opening that will catch the interest of the reader. The organization follows a logical sequence. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the paper will be complete and brings the essay to a conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The writer generally introduces the subject but does nothing to catch the interest of the reader. Although all the points presented may be valid or logical arguments, they do not seem ordered in the most effective manner. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2):
The essay does not reflect an effective opening and the major points in the paper are not logical or valid. The sequence of major topics does not seem to follow any logical pattern. The conclusion leaves the reader with little or no sense of closure. The entire essay leaves the reader confused about the arguments or their importance.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	14.0%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	55.4%	
Low	(0-2)	-	30.6%	Mean 3.12

Sixty-nine point four percent (69.4%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' writing needs improvement in this area.

Interpretation

For the students scoring in the high range the papers were well planned and organized. The introduction caught the attention of the reader, the organization followed a logical sequence, and the closing was effective in that it lead the reader to feel the paper was complete. For the students in the middle range, difficulties were encountered in one or more of these areas: the sequential and logical presentation of points and in the categorization of arguments that belonged together in the same paragraph. In many cases, conclusions were sketchy and not summative, lacked a "wrap-up" element, and left the reader with little or no sense of closure. The students in the low range encountered most or all of these difficulties.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together by phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The writer should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand with sentences varying in length and structure. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6):
The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear reference. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the sequence of the argument.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well-explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere, at times, with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2):
The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the argument and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	8.7%
Middle	(3-4)	-	66.7%
Low	(0-2)	-	24.4%

Mean 3.14

Seventy-five point four percent (75.4%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that performance in this area is satisfactory with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

In the high range, students displayed innovative styles in their presentation such as the use of an editorial or letter. Many reflected a sensitivity to the audience being addressed. In the middle range, some writers placed emphasis on content rather than communication, often the vocabulary was too general for this type of writing, and there was a lack of expressive verbs. In the low range, students encountered difficulties in choosing words and phrases that were suitable to express the purpose of the writing. Some papers revealed a lack of awareness that written language cannot be manipulated like oral language.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the essay's elements together. Focus or theme are probably best reflected in the paper's title, the major thesis, and the conclusion.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements in the essay so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the essay. After reading, the reader feels as if the topic has been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer has interjected information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These materials, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement of the essay. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the argument or explanation has been covered, but that the movement of the paper or plan has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2):
The paper does not seem to have a meaningful central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the total argument or explanation. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder what the main point or purpose of the essay was.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	13.2%
Middle	(3-4)	-	60.9%
Low	(0-2)	-	25.9%

Mean 3.13

Seventy-four point one percent (74.1%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' performance in this area is satisfactory with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

The high (13.2% of the students) had a good grasp of the focus and developed each of the elements in the essay so that it directly related to the topic. The writers in the middle range also had a theme holding each of the papers' details together. Although some unrelated information and opinions may have been interjected, the reader felt at the conclusion that he/she had been convinced by the argument provided. In the low range many of the elements were unrelated to the topic. Information, details, and opinions had been added without any concern about how they fitted into the argument or explanation.

4. IDEAS

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, has selected appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech, or the like, may be used or attempted in relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2)
The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	9.6%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	49.6%	
Low	(0-2)	-	40.8%	Mean 2.87

Fifty-nine point two percent (59.2%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' writing in this area needs considerable improvement.

Interpretation

This area was identified as being one of the weaker ones with 40.8% of the papers in the low range. The writers in the high range had selected interesting topics and dealt with them in unique, creative fashion. In the middle range, many of the ideas in the papers were generally sound but did not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. It was felt that although uniqueness and creativity may be difficult to teach, a greater variety and number of pre-writing activities would certainly improve this area. Papers in the low range did not reflect sound logical thinking.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

What is important here are the details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within the essay have been elaborated, and how the details are related.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the explanation or argument. The details appropriately elaborate or illustrate the major points of the paper and are sequenced in a logical, meaningful fashion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The details chosen seem appropriate to the explanation or argument but, at times, the details may not be sequenced appropriately or logically. The supporting details, though appropriate to the paper as a whole, may not relate directly to the major points under which they appear.

LOW (1 or 2)
The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to the audience. The writer has not adequately elaborated the explanation or argument. Details do not relate to major points or to a valid, meaningful purpose or focus in the essay.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	9.8%
Middle	(3-4)	-	44.1%
Low	(0-2)	-	46.1%
Mean	2.72		

Fifty-three point nine percent (53.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This is a weaker area and needs improvement.

Interpretation

With 46.1% of the students performing in the low range, it was felt that this area of writing would need more attention. The students performing in the high range chose appropriate details to illustrate the points of the paper and sequenced them logically. For students in the middle range, difficulties in sequential and logical presentations were apparent. Many times the writer was not able to prove and support his/her point with substantial and meaningful information. The students in the low range were unable to choose details appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to elaborate the explanation. Inadequacies in the collection of details or examples and in the elaboration of these may be a reflection of shortcomings in pre-writing preparation. Various revision activities (especially group and peer) would also help in the selection of appropriate details and in the clarity of their elaboration.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6)
A positive effect is created by the author in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2)
The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	10.4%
Middle	(3-4)	-	59.5%
Low	(0-2)	-	30.1%
Mean	3.09		

Sixty-nine point nine percent (69.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This area in the students' writing needs improvement.

Interpretation

This quality of writing was also targeted as one that needs attention as 30.1% placed in the low range of performance. For those students who scored 1's and 2's out of a possible 6, it was obvious that they did not take risks with sentence manipulation by trying different orders or complex sentences. They stuck to a simple subject/verb order type of sentence throughout and avoided compound and complex sentences. Many times the sentence structures were not appropriate or effective. In the middle range, although students seemed to have control of a number of sentence structures, the structures were, at times, ambiguous or clumsy. However, another 10.4% performed in the high range indicating ability on the part of these writers to control a variety of sentence structures and to employ them effectively in communicating.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	10.8%
Middle	(3-4)	-	62.4%
Low	(0-2)	-	26.8%
Mean	3.16		

Seventy-three point two percent (73.2%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates that performance in this area is satisfactory with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

The results in this area indicate that many elements of usage are already well in place. Seventy-three point two percent (73.2%) of the students are performing at a level appropriate to their grade level. Many of the usage errors that were present did not detract from the impact of the discourse. However, errors did appear in the following areas:

- pronoun usage
  switching from singular to plural sometimes within the same sentence
- lack of clarity in pronoun reference
- misuse of relative pronouns - e.g., "that" "who" "which"
- inconsistency in verb tense usage - e.g., going from present to past and back again in the same paragraph
- misplaced adjectives and adverbs
- misuse of prepositions "from, to, in, at, into"
- overuse of the article "the", e.g., "Why should there be a 9 o'clock curfew for the grade 8 students?"
- misplaced or lack of apostrophe in contractions, e.g., "dont" "d'ont" "c'ant"
- some homonyms not mastered, e.g., "their, they're, there"

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 or 6)
In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

LOW (1 OR 2)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	17.4%
Middle	(3-4)	-	63.1%
Low	(0-2)	-	19.5%
Mean	3.41		

Eighty point five percent (80.5%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. These results indicate that this is an area of relative strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

Punctuation and the use of capitals appears to be fairly well established.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 or 6)
Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few spelling errors appear in the writing, and in general, the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over the words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	20.4%
Middle	(3-4)	-	65.8%
Low	(0-2)	-	13.8%
Mean	3.57		

Eighty-six point two percent (86.2%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

The performance of the students was high in this area with 86.2% of them functioning at grade level or above. This is also borne out by the formal spelling test. Few spelling errors appeared in the writing and those that did, did not detract from the readability of the papers.

Narrative Writing

Many of the comments that were made concerning persuasive writing also apply to narrative writing. However, each area of the analytic scale will be discussed as it applies to this particular task. In this piece of writing the student was asked to tell a story about stepping into a time machine which takes him/her to a time period of his/her choice that he/she must describe.

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

In narrative writing, the organization or sequence of events should generally follow a temporal (time) sequence. The organization for the paper should effectively introduce the situation in general, lead the reader clearly through the series of events, then effectively come to closure. In brief, the writer should introduce effectively the setting, the characters, and should build from this introduction. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in thinking about and understanding the series of events.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer has an effective opening that catches the interest of the reader. The organization clearly follows a sequence of events without wandering. Effective transitions from one event to another are used to cue the movement of the paper for the reader. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the story is over and has come to an understandable conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The writer generally introduces the story, but does not catch the interest of the reader, or the writer begins the writing without providing the reader with the necessary background to the story or explanation. Generally, each of the events is appropriately described, but the writer may not have the movement of events clearly laid out and may not have used effective transitions to aid the reader in following the events. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2)
The writer has not attempted to catch the interest of the reader in the opening. Necessary background information may be lacking in the paper. The sequence of events in the paper may be confusing, left out, or ordered so inappropriately that the reader cannot follow the sequence of events. Transition phrases are not used to aid the reader in following the events, and the reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness at the end of the paper. The entire paper may leave the reader confused about what really happened; the reader may be confused about the importance of the events either to the characters described or to the reader.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	20.0%
Middle	(3-4)	-	57.5%
Low	(0-2)	-	27.5%
Mean	3.35		

Seventy-seven point five percent (77.5%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates a satisfactory performance in this area.

Interpretation

In this area, 77.5% of the students performed at the level of expectancy for this grade. The writers in the high range could organize their writing with an introduction, body and conclusion: they could effectively introduce the setting and characters and build from the introduction. In general the students in the middle range had a sense of what makes a good narrative and an effort was made to produce a presentable piece of writing. However, in many cases, transitions were laborious and the movement of events was choppy or incoherent. Many papers had a weak ending leaving the reader with little sense of closure. One wondered if the time element was not a contributing factor as markers had the impression that many writers felt rushed. The writings of the students in the low range lacked in most or all of the qualities that make for a well organized paper.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together in phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The author should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand, and interesting and varied in sentence structure and length. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear referents. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the series of events.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well-explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere, at times, with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2)
The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the events and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, or uninteresting.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	16.6%
Middle	(3-4)	-	60.0%
Low	(0-2)	-	23.4%
Mean	3.31		

Interpretation

Seventy-six point six percent (76.6%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges indicating a satisfactory performance in this area. Writers in the high range made effective use of dialogue and the presence of many imaginative ideas was noted. The words chosen reflected sensitivity to the audience being addressed and the style was engaging. As for the writers in the middle range, many experienced some difficulties in expressing their thoughts in a style that was engaging and fluid, using a precise and colourful vocabulary. Readers could guess at what the writer was thinking but written sentences failed to clearly convey meaning, suggesting that not enough revision had been done either through lack of time or habit. Writers in the low range had little sense of audience, and their choice of words did not in any way enhance the quality of their papers.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the paper's elements together.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements within the paper so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the paper. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These intrusions, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered, but that the movement of the paper has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2)
The paper does not seem to have a central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the flow of events. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder as to what was the main point or purpose of the paper.

Results

High (5-6) - 20.2%
Middle (3-4) - 52.8%
Low (0-2) - 27.0%
Mean 3.36

Seventy-three percent (73%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the students' performance in this area is satisfactory with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

Although 73% of the writers performed at or above the expected level for their grade, 27% scored in the low range. This would indicate that many writers had a central focus for their paper and chose incidents and details because they related to the theme. In the papers of the students in the low range, one would find a collection of events without a theme or plot. Information and details were added with little concern as to how they related to the flow of events.

4. IDEAS

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, and appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech may be used or attempted in relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2)
The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	17.2%
Middle	(3-4)	-	52.7%
Low	(0-2)	-	30.1%
Mean	3.21		

Sixty-nine point nine percent (69.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This score would indicate a need for improvement.

Interpretation

The results for ideas are higher for the narrative than for the persuasive piece (69.9%, as compared to 59.2%). This could be due in part to the fact that the students were more familiar with this genre of writing. The writers in the high range selected an engaging topic and presented it in a meaningful, creative fashion. In the middle range, the ideas presented were sound, but uniqueness and creativity of thinking were lacking and little attempt was made to employ humour or appropriate figures of speech. In the low range, the papers were devoid of creativity or logic.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 or 6)

The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the description of the process or the telling of the story and are elaborated in such a manner as to be interesting to the reader without getting carried away. The words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech, etc. seem to have been selected and presented in such a manner as to make the events or description alive, real to the reader, and clear.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

The details chosen seem appropriate to the description or story but, at times, the writing seems to lack life. The elaboration may not allow the reader to visualize the events adequately and may not be clear to the reader. Though adequately described, the story may lack the life that vivid writing and expression could give it.

LOW (1 or 2)

The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to his/her audience. The writer has not appropriately elaborated the events and the writing is lifeless. The expression used by the writer not only is not vivid, but also may be boring and unreal.

Results

High (5-6) - 15.5%
Middle (3-4) - 49.0%
Low (0-2) - 35.5%
Mean 3.07

Sixty-four point five percent (64.5%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area in the students' writing needs improvement.

Interpretation

Choice of details and elaboration of ideas is another weaker area, with 35.5% of the students performing in the low range. The high range presented papers written in such a manner as to make the descriptions alive and real. Papers in the middle range frequently lacked imagery, figures of speech, and descriptive words or phrases. The details chosen may have been appropriate but the lack of elaboration of these ideas produced papers that were often stilted and unreal. In the low range, it was evident that the papers did not contain the necessary details, nor were the events appropriately elaborated, or priorized to present interesting, coherent narratives.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6)
A positive effect is created by the writer in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2)
The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively-constructed sentences.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	16.8%
Middle	(3-4)	-	52.0%
Low	(0-2)	-	31.2%
Mean	3.18		

Sixty-eight point eight percent (68.8%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this is an area of the students' writing that needs improvement.

Interpretation

In the high range, students were able to control a variety of sentence structures and to employ them effectively. In the middle range, some students did use a number of sentence structures although at times some of them may have been ambiguous or clumsy. Students scoring in the low range encountered difficulty in manipulating sentence structures; variety in sentence structure was lacking with many of the sentences being repetitious and of the subject/verb kind. When a complex sentence was attempted, the structure was faulty and many sentences were run-on.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	16.3%
Middle	(3-4)	-	61.4%
Low	(0-2)	-	22.3%
Mean	3.34		

Seventy-seven point seven percent (77.7%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. These results, although fairly satisfactory, indicate that this area needs some improvement.

Interpretation

The results of usage for narrative writing were somewhat higher than for persuasive writing. Sixteen point three percent (16.3%) of the students placed in the high range as compared with 10.8% for the essay. Many of the errors in usage noted in the persuasive papers were also present in the narratives: pronoun, article and preposition usage, placement of adjectives and adverbs, inconsistency in verb tense usage, errors in contractions, homonyms, and spelling of past tense in verbs. Some or many of these errors were found in papers in all ranges of performance.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 or 6)
In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity and readability of the paper.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	- 25.1%
Middle	(3-4)	- 51.8%
Low	(0-2)	- 23.1%
Mean	3.50	

Seventy-six point nine percent (76.9%) of the students scored in the middle and high range. These results indicate that student performance in this area was satisfactory.

Interpretation

The scores in this area were satisfactory in that 76.9% of the students placed in the high and middle range. Capitals and punctuation were used effectively to make the writing clear and readable, and errors that did appear did not perceptibly detract from the clarity of the paper. As was the case with the persuasive writing, the use of commas appeared to present the most difficulty.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 or 6)
Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few spelling errors appear in the writing, and in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	26.1%
Middle	(3-4)	-	58.2%
Low	(0-2)	-	15.7%
Mean	3.66		

Eighty-four point three percent (84.3%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. These results indicate that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

The results in spelling were good, with many of the errors reflecting meaningful "guesses" at the words being used, e.g., "labratory", "discusting". The spelling errors in narrative writing confirm the equally strong spelling performance in persuasive writing reported earlier.

Spelling Test

This table presents the results of the spelling test. Students were presented with a list of twenty-four words to spell. The words were spoken in isolation, used in a sentence and finally repeated in isolation for the students.

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. scientist	84.7%	13. generally	76.0%
2. items	89.4	14. official	68.6
3. companies	82.8	15. eliminate	55.8
4. economy	75.4	16. parliament	28.7
5. describe	73.7	17. necessary	39.7
6. personnel	18.3	18. finally	84.7
7. restaurant	55.6	19. funeral	83.0
8. confusion	80.5	20. wealthy	87.5
9. complain	88.7	21. experiment	77.7
10. temperature	73.2	22. obvious	70.3
11. immigrants	31.2	23. employee	62.8
12. community	78.1	24. deduction	85.4

Mean: 16.52

From this table one notes that the spelling of most words presented little difficulty to the majority of students. Most frequent errors included:

personnel - written with one "n" or confused with personal
immigrants - written emigrants (perhaps a hearing or pronunciation difficulty
parliament - written with an "i", "e", or "ai" for "ia"
necessary - written "nesessary".

Summary of Grade 8 Results

General Impression Marking Scale

Persuasive Writing

471	papers were evaluated.
6.28	was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
76.2%	of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
19.7%	of these scored between 9 and 12.
4.7%	were awarded full marks by one or both markers.
23.8%	of the papers were rated within the low range (0-4).
1.1%	of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Narrative Writing

471	papers were evaluated.
6.55	was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
79.4%	of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
23.1%	of these scored between 9 and 12.
6.2%	were awarded full marks by one or both markers.
20.6%	of the papers were rated within the low range (0-4).
1.7%	of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Analytic Scales (mean scores in brackets)

Persuasive Writing

The highest scores on the Analytic scale were recorded for Spelling (3.57) and Punctuation and Capitalization (3.41) with 86.1% and 80.5% of students respectively performing at middle or high levels.

The lowest scores were in Ideas (2.87) with 40.8% of students performing at the low level and in Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas (2.72) with the performance of 46.1% of students in the low category.

Scores obtained in the other qualities were: Organization and Sequencing (3.12) with 69.4% of students in the middle and high level (3 to 6) and 30.6% in low level (0 to 2); Wording and Style (3.14)) with 75.0% of students in middle and high range and 24.9% in the low; Focus and Theme (3.18) with 74.1% of students in middle and high and 24.9% in low; Usage (3.16) with 73.2% in middle and high and 26.8% in the low range; Sentence Structure (3.09) with 69.9% of students in middle and high and 30.1% of students in low range.

Narrative Writing

The highest scores were obtained in Spelling (3.66) and Punctuation and Capitalization (3.50) with 84.3% and 76.9% of the students respectively scoring within the high range (5 and 6).

Mean performance scores for the other qualities were all within the middle range, 3 or 4 out of a maximum of 6.

The lowest scores were obtained in Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas (3.07) with 35% of students in the low range, 0 to 2; in Ideas (3.21) with 30.1% in the low range; and in Sentence Structure (3.18) with 31.2% of students in the low range.

In Wording and Style (3.31), Focus or Theme (3.36) and Usage (3.34), 23.4%, 27%, and 22.3% of the students respectively scored in the low, 0 to 2, range.

PART III: Spelling

The results of the Spelling test reflected the scores awarded to Spelling in the two written tasks.

Out of the 24 words on the test list, the 471 students in the provincial sample scored a mean of 16.52 correctly spelled words.

Fifty-nine point nine percent (59.9%) of the students tested scored within the high range of 18 to 24 correctly spelled words; 30.1% scored in the middle range with between 9 and 17 words spelled correctly. Ten percent (10.0%) of students registered scores in the low level between 0 and 8 correctly spelled words.

Interpretation of Grade 8 Results

Results from the GIM indicate that in persuasive writing 76.2% of the students performed in the middle and high range; in narrative writing 79.4% of the students attained the same level of performance. These results indicate that an acceptable percentage of the grade 8 students present a paper in both genres of writing where the quality of thought is appropriate for the grade level. In all aspects of organization and presentation, a good percentage of papers demonstrated performance that was acceptable for a grade 8 student. It was felt that these students had a general awareness of the qualities and attributes particular to the two tasks.

In both written tasks when measured on the Analytic marking scale, the qualities of Ideas, Choice of Details and Elaboration, and Sentence Structure appear to need more instruction. The best performances were measured in Spelling and Punctuation and Capitalization.

On the whole, students were more comfortable with the Narrative assignment. The higher scores in Wording and Style in the Narrative than in the Persuasive writing reflect the difficulty many students had in expressing their meaning in the latter assignment.

CHAPTER 5

Grade 11 Results

The grade 11 test consisted of two writing tasks and a short spelling test.

PART I - Process Writing
PART II - Essay Writing
PART III - A spelling test of 20 words

PART I

The Process Writing assignment required students to write a lively, knowledgeable piece explaining how something is done or organized.

Students were given 45 minutes in which to prepare a rough draft and to re-write the final copy.

PART II

In the Essay Writing task students were asked to write an essay, two to four pages long, following their reading of an article on parent-child relationships.

In the essay the student had to present a personal view as to what the nature of the relationship should be between a sixteen-year-old and his or her family.

Two sessions were allotted to this task. The first session of 45 minutes allowed students to read and discuss the article in small groups and prepare a first draft. In the second session they were given 50 minutes to revise, edit, and write their final drafts.

PART III

The spelling test of twenty (20) words was an assessment of the students' ability to spell grade-level words.

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ENGLISH 200

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	14.8%	64.6%	20.6%	6.62
1. Organization and Sequence	18.5	65.1	16.4	3.42
2. Wording and Style	16.9	69.9	13.2	3.38
3. Focus or Theme	10.1	68.2	21.7	3.66
4. Ideas	18.5	70.9	10.6	3.28
5. Detail/Elaboration	20.1	68.8	11.1	3.26
6. Sentence Structure	24.9	62.9	12.2	3.22
7. Usage	23.8	59.8	16.4	3.32
8. Punctuation/Capitals	9.5	59.8	30.7	3.85
9. Spelling	11.6	47.1	41.3	4.02

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	12.7%	61.4%	25.9%	7.02
1. Organization and Sequence	25.4	55.6	19.0	3.38
2. Wording and Style	14.3	70.4	15.3	3.48
3. Focus or Theme	23.8	59.3	16.9	3.35
4. Ideas	19.6	64.5	15.9	3.39
5. Detail/Elaboration	21.2	62.4	16.4	3.35
6. Sentence Structure	18.0	63.5	18.5	3.45
7. Usage	23.3	58.2	18.5	3.34
8. Punctuation/Capitals	12.2	48.6	39.2	3.93
9. Spelling	12.2	47.1	40.7	3.97

NOTE: Number of students tested = 189

ENGLISH 201

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	29.1%	68.4%	2.5%	5.34
1. Organization and Sequence	38.0	55.7	6.3	2.92
2. Wording and Style	29.1	65.8	5.1	2.91
3. Focus or Theme	22.8	63.3	13.9	3.23
4. Ideas	43.0	54.5	2.5	2.65
5. Detail/Elaboration	49.4	49.3	1.3	2.52
6. Sentence Structure	43.0	54.5	2.5	2.63
7. Usage	32.9	64.6	2.5	2.81
8. Punctuation/Capitals	16.5	63.2	20.3	3.48
9. Spelling	22.8	51.9	25.3	3.47

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	29.1%	65.8%	5.1%	5.46
1. Organization and Sequence	60.8	35.4	3.8	2.38
2. Wording and Style	36.7	57.0	6.3	2.76
3. Focus or Theme	51.9	41.8	6.3	2.47
4. Ideas	38.0	62.0	0.0	2.68
5. Detail/Elaboration	44.3	51.9	3.8	2.62
6. Sentence Structure	46.8	44.3	8.9	2.62
7. Usage	48.1	38.0	13.9	2.82
8. Punctuation/Capitals	22.8	56.9	20.3	3.41
9. Spelling	25.3	45.6	29.1	3.47

NOTE: Number of students tested = 79

ENGLISH 200 & 201 COMBINED

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	19.1%	64.4%	16.5%	6.32
1. Organization and Sequence	24.1	61.2	14.7	3.31
2. Wording and Style	20.1	68.4	11.5	3.27
3. Focus or Theme	14.0	65.5	20.5	3.54
4. Ideas	25.9	65.1	9.0	3.11
5. Detail/Elaboration	27.7	63.3	9.0	3.07
6. Sentence Structure	29.5	60.8	9.7	3.08
7. Usage	25.5	61.2	13.3	3.22
8. Punctuation/Capitals	12.2	60.1	27.7	3.75
9. Spelling	15.1	48.2	33.7	3.87

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	17.6%	62.3%	20.1%	6.60
1. Organization and Sequence	35.3	50.0	14.7	3.12
2. Wording and Style	21.2	65.5	13.3	3.29
3. Focus or Theme	31.3	54.7	14.0	3.13
4. Ideas	23.7	64.4	11.9	3.22
5. Detail/Elaboration	26.6	59.7	13.7	3.18
6. Sentence Structure	26.6	57.2	16.2	3.22
7. Usage	30.6	51.1	18.3	3.22
8. Punctuation/Capitals	14.4	51.4	34.2	3.81
9. Spelling	15.5	46.0	38.5	3.85

NOTE: **Number of students tested = 278. (This exceeds the sum of 200 and 201 students because 10 students failed to indicate in which course they were enrolled.)**

General Impression Marking

General Impression Marking is a judgement about the overall quality of a student's writing given the purpose of the writing and the audience to which it is addressed.

The GIM scale attempts to rate compositions in a general, global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall organization, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice.

Both tasks, process writing and essay writing were rated twice on a scale of 0-6 by two different markers. The two scores were then combined for a score on a scale of 0-12.

Samples scoring in the high range showed evidence of the following qualities:

HIGH (5 or 6): The paper has evidence of sound thinking on the part of the writer. The quality of thought reflects a mature point of view. The organization of the paper indicates careful planning and thinking on the part of the writer, and the paper is presented in an effective, meaningful fashion. The style is appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper, and the word choice and use reflect a mature, sophisticated grasp of language and language use. The level of the paper is appropriate for the audience being addressed (in this case, a student's classmates) and fulfills the identified purpose.

Samples revealing the following characteristics scored in the middle range:

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The thinking of the writer seems appropriate to the grade level of the student but reflects a level of maturity less than adult-like. The organization of the paper is generally appropriate, though the writer might have been more careful in planning and carrying out an organizational pattern. The thinking is meaningful, but at times the paper may wander from the central thrust or movement. The style, though generally appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper, may reflect some inconsistencies or repetitions to the point of being distracting. Word choice reflects the level and maturity of the student but may not always be appropriate to the audience to which the paper is addressed. In general, the paper achieves its identified purpose, but it may wander or not take advantage of obvious opportunities in achieving that purpose.

Samples scoring in the low range denoted the following characteristics:

LOW (1 or 2): The thinking that is evident in the paper seems inconsistent and immature, reflecting an identifiably egocentric point of view. The organization of the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect any careful planning or any meaningful organizational pattern. The thrust or movement of the paper is interrupted by wandering discourse, unnecessary asides, or inappropriate information. The style is inconsistent and immature, and repetitive or uninteresting structures are consistently used. Word choice is inappropriate, distracting, and shallow. The writer seems to have little consideration for the audience or reader and does not consistently address himself/herself to the identified purpose of the paper.

Results on a scale of 0-12

	Process Writing				Essay		
	Combined				Combined		
	200 & 201	200	201		200 & 201	200	201
High (9-12)	16.5%	20.6%	2.5%	High (9-12)	20.1%	25.9%	5.1%
Middle (5-8)	64.4	64.6	68.4	Middle (5-8)	62.3	61.4	65.8
Low (0-4)	19.1	14.8	29.1	Low (0-4)	17.6	12.7	29.1
Mean	6.32	6.62	5.34	Mean	6.60	7.02	5.46

Process Writing: 80.9% of all grade 11 students, 85.2% of English 200 students, and 70.9% of English 201 students placed in the middle to high range (5-12).

Essay Writing: 82.4% of all grade 11 students, 87.3% of English 200 students, and 70.9% of English 201 students placed in the middle to high range (5-12).

It was felt that these results generally reflected the expected performance of the identified population when 200's and 201's are combined, with 1 out of 5 performing at the high level and two-thirds of the students in the middle range. When results for both groups are given separately, figures indicate that a good majority of students from both groups place in the middle range. The writing of these students is less identifiable as belonging to a specific group. However, a much higher percentage of 200 students scored in the high range, while many more 201 students scored in the low range.

Analytical Scale

In the following pages, each area of the analytical scale will be analyzed separately. The criteria for judging the different skills are the same for both tasks, process writing and essay writing, except for the area of organization and sequence. Therefore, all areas will be given one interpretation, whereas organization and sequence will receive two, one for each task.

PROCESS WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE (for process writing)
   In process writing, the organization or sequence should generally follow the steps of the process itself, usually in a temporal (time) sequence. The organization for the paper should introduce the process, lead the reader clearly through the steps of the process, then effectively come to closure.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has an effective opening that catches the interest of the reader. The organization closely and clearly follows the steps in the process. If sub-processes are explained, the writer has cued the reader to these sub-areas and has clearly identified the steps of each. Effective transitions from one step to another are used. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the process is complete and has usually some general information about the process as a whole or its importance.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer generally introduces the process but does not catch the interest of the reader, or she/he begins the description of the process without an introduction. Generally, all of the steps of the process are present and in the appropriate order, but the writer may not have the steps clearly laid out or may not employ transitions that aid the reader in following the process. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2): The writer has not attempted to catch the interest of the reader in his/her opening. The steps of the process are confused or ordered so inappropriately that the reader cannot follow the process. Transition phrases are not used to aid the reader in effectively following the steps, and the reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness at the end of the paper. The entire paper may leave the reader confused about the process itself or of its importance.

Results

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	14.7%	16.4%	6.3%
Middle	61.2	65.1	55.7
Low	24.1	18.5	38.0
Mean	3.31	3.42	2.92

Eighty-one point five percent (81.5%) of the 200 students and 62.0% of the 201 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the 200 students' performance in this area is satisfactory. The 201 students' performance needs improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the high range (16.4% (200) - 6.3% (201)) showed competent organization in process writing. The writers had an effective opening that caught the interest of the reader; transitions were present, and the closing led one to feel that the process was complete. In the middle range (65.1% (200) - 55.7% (201)) all the steps of the process were generally in order, but many students tended to write a series of one- or two-line paragraphs with little concept of topic sentence and with an ineffective use or an absence of transition phrases. The students in the low range (18.5% (200) - 38.0% (201)) presented papers devoid of the qualities that make for a well-organized presentation.

ESSAY WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

In personal opinion writing, the organization should follow a logical, usually causal, sequence. The essay should indicate that the topic has been effectively introduced, the major points should follow one another logically, and the paper should come to an effective close or conclusion. Organization and sequence is probably most evident in the major topics and in the concluding paragraph.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has written an effective opening that will catch the interest of the reader. The organization follows a logical sequence. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the paper is complete and brings the essay to a conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer generally introduces the subject but does nothing to catch the interest of the reader. Although all the points presented may be valid or logical arguments, they do not seem ordered in the most effective manner. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2): The essay does not reflect an effective opening and the major points in the paper are not logical or valid. The sequence of major topics does not seem to follow any logical pattern. The conclusion leaves the reader with little or no sense of closure. The entire essay leaves the reader confused about the arguments or their importance.

Results

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	14.7%	19.0%	3.8%
Middle	50.0	55.6	35.4
Low	35.3	25.4	60.8
Mean	3.12	3.38	2.38

Seventy-four point six percent (74.6%) of the 200 students and 39.2% of the 201 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the 200 students' performance in this area is satisfactory with some need for improvement. The 201 students' performance needs improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the high range (19.0% (200) and 3.8% (201)) presented essays that followed a logical sequence. Both the opening and the closing of the paper were effective. For the students in the middle range (55.6% (200) and 35.4% (201)), essays denoted several weaknesses. Many papers failed to introduce the central idea or thesis in a clear opening paragraph that caught the interest of the reader and set the direction for the essay.

Deficiencies were noted in topic sentences and transition phrases. In many cases conclusions were, generally, little more than one-line paragraphs which left the reader confused as to the importance of the arguments presented. Another weakness noted quite frequently was the absence of a line of logic being developed by the writers. Coherence may have been present in a cluster of two or three sentences but this inter-connectedness did not extend from paragraph to paragraph or from one section of the paper to another. The essays written by the students in the low range (25.4% (200) and 60.8% (201)) showed very little or no evidence of the qualities that make for a well laid-out essay. In general, results for organization and sequence were better for process writing than for essay writing, probably because process writing lends itself better to sequential organization.

2. WORDING AND STYLE (for process writing and personal opinion essay)

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together in phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The writer should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand, and interesting and varied in sentence structure and sentence length. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 or 6): The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear reference. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the process or series of events.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2): The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the process or events and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	11.5%	13.2%	5.1%
Middle	68.4	69.9	65.8
Low	20.1	16.9	29.1
Mean	3.27	3.38	2.91

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	13.3%	15.3%	6.3%
Middle	65.5	70.4	57.0
Low	21.2	14.3	36.7
Mean	3.29	3.48	2.76

For process writing, 83.1% of the 200 students and for essay writing, 85.7% of the 200 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates satisfactory student performance in this area.

For process writing, 70.7% of the 201 students and for essay writing, 63.3% of 201 students scored in the middle and high ranges. While many students performed satisfactorily, there is need for improvement.

Interpretation

For the students scoring in the high range the words chosen for their writing were precise, exact, and reflected sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The style was engaging, length and structure of sentences were varied, and the papers were easy to read and understand. In the middle range, some students had many ideas on the topic but not sufficient language skills to express them in a lively fashion. Thoughts were written sometimes in awkward sentence forms, indicating a need to improve students' awareness of precise syntax. In the low range, words and phrases chosen seemed colourless, uninteresting, or too general or ambiguous. Many writers had not internalized a sense of audience and their papers did not reveal a sensitivity to the reader. The results indicate that 201 students favored process writing as they performed better on this task than they did on the essay writing task, while 200 students performed somewhat better on the essay writing task than they did on the process writing.

3. FOCUS OR THEME (process writing and essay writing)

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of the writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains it throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the paper's elements together.

HIGH (5 OR 6): The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements within the paper so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the paper. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events or process has been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These intrusions, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events or process have been covered, but that the movement of the paper has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2): The paper does not seem to have a central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the description of the process or the flow of events. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder what the main point or purpose of the essay was.

Results - Process Writing

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	20.5%	21.7%	13.9%
Middle	65.5	68.2	63.3
Low	14.0	10.1	22.8
Mean	3.54	3.66	3.23

Results - Essay Writing

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	14.0%	16.9%	6.3%
Middle	54.7	59.3	41.8
Low	31.3	23.8	51.9
Mean	3.13	3.35	2.47

In process writing, 89.9% of the 200 students scored in the high and middle range. This indicates a strength in these students' writing. In essay writing, 76.2% scored in the same ranges, indicating satisfactory performance in this area. For the 201 students, focus and theme in process writing was satisfactory with 77.2% of the papers scoring in the high and middle ranges. The essay writing results for 201 students indicate that there is a need for improvement with only 48.1% performing in the high and middle ranges.

Interpretation

The results for focus and theme indicate that generally writers were better able to stay on task for process writing than for essay writing. For the students performing in the high range, the focus of the paper (for each genre) was clearly discernible, and all details, information, and opinions related to the central purpose of the paper. For the papers scoring in the middle range, in many cases, the direction established in the introduction was forgotten during the development of the writing. The assigned task in the essay was to write an opinion essay in order to persuade the audience of the validity of an adopted viewpoint. Many writers, having set themselves up well in the first paragraph, by the middle of the essay, lost sight of their direction and strayed off the topic. This became even more obvious when there was no title on the paper. In many cases, the writing became a narrative piece, as students described personal experiences which strayed from the purpose of the essay.

4. IDEAS (for process writing and essay writing)

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, has selected appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech, or the like may be used or attempted in describing the process or relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons, or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2): The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	9.0%	10.6%	2.5%
Middle	65.1	70.9	54.5
Low	25.9	18.5	43.0
Mean	3.11	3.28	2.65

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	11.9%	15.9%	0.0%
Middle	64.4	64.5	62.0
Low	23.7	19.6	38.0
Mean	3.22	3.39	2.68

Eighty-one point five percent (81.5%) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges for ideas in process writing. Eighty point four percent (80.4%) performed in the same ranges in essay writing. This indicates satisfactory performance for these students on both tasks. Fifty-seven percent (57.0%) of the 201 students scored in the middle/high ranges for ideas in process writing, and 62.0% scored in the same ranges in essay writing. This would indicate a need for improvement in this area.

Interpretation

The students performing in the high range selected an engaging topic and developed it in a unique, creative fashion. Process writing seemed to generate a greater variety of responses which appeared to be more interesting, while several pieces contained humour thus bringing occasional comic relief.

It was generally felt that the two writing tasks did not provide scope for students' creativity or originality. For the papers in the middle range, the essay topic produced surprisingly conventional content. Many students adopted an essentially egocentric point of view, preferring the safe-route to risk-taking, and presenting the acceptable or obvious in cliché form.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS (for process writing and essay writing)

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 or 6): The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the description of the process or the support of an opinion and are elaborated in such a manner as to be interesting to the reader without getting carried away. The words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech, etc. seem to have been selected and presented in such a manner as to make the process, opinions, or description alive, real to the reader, and clear.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The details chosen seem appropriate to the description or theme but, at times, the writing seems to lack life. The elaboration may not allow the reader to visualize the process or ideas adequately and may not be clear to the reader. Though adequately described, the process or essay may lack the life that vivid writing and expression could give it.

LOW (1 or 2): The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to his/her audience. The writer has not appropriately elaborated the process or opinions and the writing is lifeless. The expression used by the writer not only is not vivid, but also may be boring and unreal.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	9.0%	11.1%	1.3%
Middle	63.3	68.8	49.3
Low	27.7	20.1	19.4
Mean	3.07	3.26	2.52

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	13.7%	16.4%	3.8%
Middle	59.7	62.4	51.9
Low	26.6	21.2	44.3
Mean	3.18	3.35	2.62

Seventy-nine point nine percent (79.9%) of the 200 students scored in the middle/high ranges in this area for process writing indicating a satisfactory performance in choice of details and elaboration of ideas. A satisfactory score was also obtained in essay writing with 78.8% scoring in the middle/high ranges. This area is one that needs to be improved by the 201 students, with the score being 50.6% (process writing) and 55.7% (essay writing), for the high/middle ranges.

Interpretation

Students in the high range chose details that were appropriate to the description; words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech were presented and used to convey ideas that gave life to the writing. For those papers in the middle range, content in both pieces tended to be too general. Little use was made of details or explanations and, as a result, the writings were dull and mediocre. While the percentage of 200 students scoring in the middle to high range indicated a satisfactory performance, the markers identified this as an area of weakness.

Some inconsistency was noted. Although ideas and elaboration of ideas are closely related, certain students whose ideas rated a 2 out of a possible 6 developed these ideas with considerable thoroughness, while others with unusual and original ideas neglected to develop them to their potential.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE (for process writing and essay writing)

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6): A positive effect is created by the writer in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2): The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	9.7%	12.2%	2.5%
Middle	60.8	62.9	54.5
Low	29.5	24.9	43.0
Mean	3.08	3.22	2.63

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	16.2%	18.5%	8.9%
Middle	57.2	63.5	44.3
Low	26.6	18.0	46.8
Mean	3.22	3.45	2.62

Seventy-five point one percent (75.1%) (process writing) and 82% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges in sentence structure for both pieces of writing. This indicates satisfactory performance on the part of these students in this area.

The students in the 201 group scored 57% (process writing) and 53.2% (essay writing) in the high/middle ranges. This indicates a need for improvement in sentence structure.

Interpretation

The results on this quality indicate that for the 200 group, nearly one out of five students (18.5%) scored in the high range and were able to manipulate a variety of sentence structures and use them effectively in essay writing. The percentage is somewhat lower in process writing (12.2%). Much lower percentages of the 201 group scored in the high range. It was noted that for those performing at the lower levels, too many simple sentences were present with the compound/complex type appearing infrequently. Furthermore, run-on sentences or sentence fragments were common.

7. USAGE (for process writing and essay writing)

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject, verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6): The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results - Process Writing

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	13.3%	16.4%	2.5%
Middle	61.2	59.8	64.6
Low	25.5	23.8	32.9
Mean	3.22	3.32	2.81

Results - Essay Writing

	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	18.3%	18.5%	13.9%
Middle	51.1	58.2	38.0
Low	30.6	23.3	48.1
Mean	3.22	3.34	2.82

Seventy-six point two percent (76.2%) (process writing) and 76.7% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the middle/high ranges for usage. This indicates a satisfactory performance with some need for improvement. Sixty-seven point one percent (67.1%) (process writing) and 51.9% (essay writing) of the 201 students performed in the middle/high range. This indicates a need for improvement in usage for these students.

Interpretation

As noted above, the results indicate that this is an area that needs improvement in many students' writing. Even in some well-organized, focused pieces, the following errors were present:

- incorrect use of future, future perfect tenses, past tenses
- faulty pronoun reference
- misuse of apostrophe in possessives
- lack of objectivity in writing through the use of "you".
- misuse of prepositions
- incorrect use of idiomatic phrases
- use of double negatives.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS (for process writing and essay writing)

HIGH (5 or 6): In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	27.7%	30.7%	20.3%
Middle	60.1	59.8	63.2
Low	12.2	9.5	16.5
Mean	3.75	3.85	3.48

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	34.2%	39.2%	20.3%
Middle	51.4	48.6	56.9
Low	14.4	12.2	22.8
Mean	3.81	3.93	3.41

Ninety point five percent (90.5%) (process writing) and 87.8% (essay writing) of the 200 students scored in the middle/high range for this area. This indicates that the area of punctuation and capitals is a definite strength in the students' writing. Eighty-three point five percent (83.5%) (process writing) and 77.2% (essay writing) of the 201 students scored in the middle/high ranges for this area. Punctuation/capitals appears as a strength for these students in process writing and a satisfactory performance in essay writing.

Interpretation

This is an area where both groups (200 - 201) showed strength in both pieces of writing. It was noted that the use of colons and semi-colons was generally poor or in many instances non-existent. Comma faults were also present although not as common. There was very little opportunity to use capitals in titles or question marks in dialogue. It was suggested that a task specifically set up to test these skills might be useful from the research point of view.

9. SPELLING (for process writing and essay writing)

HIGH (5 or 6): Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results - Process Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	33.7%	41.3%	25.3%
Middle	48.2	47.1	51.9
Low	15.1	11.6	22.8
Mean	3.87	4.02	3.47

Results - Essay Writing	Combined 200/201	200	201
High	38.5%	40.7%	29.1%
Middle	46.0	47.1	45.6
Low	15.5	12.2	25.3
Mean	3.85	3.97	3.47

Eighty-eight point four percent (88.4%) (process writing) and 87.8% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges. This indicates that spelling is a strength in these students' writing. Seventy-seven point two percent (77.2%) (process writing) and 74.7% (essay writing) in spelling for the middle/high ranges for the 201 group, indicating a satisfactory performance with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the 200 group performed well in spelling with 88.4% and 87.8% of the students scoring in the high/middle range on both tasks. The 201 students scored slightly better in spelling in the process writing (77.2% in high/middle) as opposed to 74.7% in the essays. Some common errors noted were: "recieve", "responsability", "alot".

Spelling Results

Students were presented with a list of twenty words to spell. The words were spoken in isolation, used in a sentence, and finally repeated in isolation for the students.

English 200 & 201 Combined

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	75.5%	11. development	80.9%
2. library	88.5	12. restaurant	66.2
3. quotation	89.9	13. ineligible	32.4
4. environment	66.5	14. misspell	64.4
5. thoughtful	83.8	15. complaints	86.3
6. occurred	25.2	16. mosquito	65.5
7. insincerely	49.3	17. basically	80.9
8. remembrance	50.0	18. grudge	84.5
9. facilitate	70.5	19. prejudicious	38.1
10. diagnostic	78.1	20. parliament	60.4

Mean 13.37

English 200

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	79.9%	11. development	82.0%
2. library	91.0	12. restaurant	73.0
3. quotation	92.6	13. ineligible	36.0
4. environment	73.0	14. misspell	63.5
5. thoughtful	86.2	15. complaints	88.4
6. occurred	27.5	16. mosquito	68.3
7. insincerely	54.0	17. basically	87.8
8. remembrance	51.3	18. grudge	88.9
9. facilitate	76.7	19. prejudicious	40.7
10. diagnostic	83.6	20. parliament	66.1

Mean 14.11

English 201

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	62.0%	11. development	75.9%
2. library	81.0	12. restaurant	48.1
3. quotation	81.0	13. ineligible	22.8
4. environment	49.4	14. misspell	62.0
5. thoughtful	77.2	15. complaints	79.7
6. occurred	17.7	16. mosquito	58.2
7. insincerely	32.9	17. basically	63.3
8. remembrance	49.4	18. grudge	73.4
9. facilitate	55.7	19. prejudicious	25.3
10. diagnostic	60.8	20. parliament	43.0

Mean 11.19

Interpretation

The results of the spelling test confirm the spelling scores of the writing tasks that the spelling of basic words is fairly well established for most students.

On examining the samples, one notes no definite trend in the most common errors save for the following exemptions:

- the word "occurred" was frequently spelled with one "r"
- the word "insincerely" was spelled "insincerly"
- the word "misspell" was spelled with one "s"
- the words "ineligible" and "prejudicious" evidenced the greatest variety of spellings.

Summary of Grade 11 Results

General Impression Marking Scale

Process Writing

Combined 200/201

278 papers were evaluated.
6.32 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
80.9% of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
16.5% of these scored in the high range (9-12)
19.1% scored in the low range (0-4).
1.8% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

English 200

189 papers were evaluated.
6.62 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
85.2% of the students scored in the middle/high range (5-12)
20.6% of these scored in the high range (9-12)
14.8% scored in the low range (0-4).
1.6% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

English 201

79 papers were evaluated.
5.34 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
70.9% of the students scored in the middle/high range (5-12)
2.5% of these scored in the high range (9-12)
29.1% scored in the low range (0-4).
2.5% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Essay Writing

Combined 200/201

278 papers were evaluated.
6.60 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
82.4% of the students scored in the middle and high range (5-12)
20.1% of these scored between 9 and 12.
17.6% of the papers were rated within the low range (0-4).
1.4% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

English 200

189 papers were evaluated.
7.02 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
87.3% of the students scored in the middle/high range (5-12)
25.9% of these scored in the high range (9-12)
12.7% scored in the low range (0-4).
1.1% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

English 201

79 papers were evaluated.
5.46 was the mean performance score out of a possible 12.
70.9% of the students scored in the middle/high range (5-12)
5.1% of these scored in the high range (9-12)
29.1% scored in the low range (0-4).
2.5% of these scored zero (too little material to score).

Analytic Scales (mean scores in brackets)

Process Writing

Combined 200/201

On the Analytic Marking scales, out of a maximum of 6, the best performance scores for the Process Writing test were in Spelling (3.87), Punctuation and Capitals (3.75), and Focus or Theme (3.54), with 84.9%, 87.8%, and 86.0% of students respectively scoring within the combined middle and high range, from 3 to 6.

The scores in the other elements were somewhat lower. In Ideas (3.11), 65.1% of students obtained scores within the combined middle and high range of 3 to 6. In Organization and Sequence (3.31), Wording and Style (3.27), and Usage (3.28) respectively 61.1%, 68.4%, and 70.9% of the students scored from 3 to 6.

The lowest scores for this sample were in Choice of Detail and Elaboration (3.07) and in Sentence Structure (3.08). In the former, 63.3% of the students, and in the latter, 60.8% of the students, scored in the middle and high range from 3 to 6.

English 200

On the Analytic scale, the best performances were in Spelling (4.02), with 88.4% of students scoring between 3 and 6; Punctuation and Capitalization (3.85), with 90.5% of students in the same middle and high range; and in Focus and Theme (3.66), with 89.9% students with the 3 to 6, middle and high, range of performance.

Organization and Sequence (3.42) and Wording and Style (3.38) registered 65.0% and 69.8% of students in middle and high range from 3 to 6.

The scores for Ideas (3.28), Choice of Detail and Elaboration (3.26) and Sentence Structure (3.22) were somewhat lower with 60.9%, 68.8%, and 63.0% of students in the middle and high range.

English 201

On the Analytic scale the best scores out of a possible 6 were obtained in Punctuation and Capitalization (3.48) and Spelling (3.47). In the former quality, 83.5% of students scored between 3 and 6; in the latter, Spelling, 77.2% of students were in the middle and high range. Focus or Theme (3.23) with 77.2% of students in the combined middle and high range showed comparable performance.

The other six qualities registered lower scores with approximately 50% of the students scoring in the low range, between 0 and 3. These qualities included Organization and Sequence (2.92), Wording and Style (2.91), Usage (2.81), Ideas (2.65), Detail and Elaboration (2.52), and Sentence Structure (2.63).

Essay Writing

Combined 200/201

On the Analytic Scale marking, the best scores out of a possible 6 were obtained in Spelling (3.85) and Punctuation and Capitalization (3.81), with 84.6% of the students in the middle and high range, from 3 to 6, and 85.6% in the same range in Punctuation and Capitalization.

There was considerable uniformity in the scores achieved in the other qualities of writing: Organization and Sequence (3.12) with 64.8% of students scoring between 3 and 6; Wording and Style (3.29), with 78.7% of students in the same category between 3 and 6; Focus and Theme (3.13), with 68.7% in the middle and high category

Ideas (3.22), Choice of Detail and Elaboration (3.18), Sentence Structure (3.22), and Usage (3.22) registered 70% of students in the middle and high range between 3 and 6.

English 200

On the Analytic scale marking, the highest scores were awarded for Spelling (3.97) with 87.8% of students in the middle and high range, and for Punctuation and Capitalization (3.93) with 87.8% of papers in the middle and high range between 3 and 6.

In the other qualities, more than 75% of the students scored in the middle and high range. The following mean performance scores indicate overall performance: Organization and Sequence (3.38), Wording and Style (3.48), Focus and Theme (3.35), Ideas (3.39), Choice of Detail and Elaboration (3.35), Sentence Structure (3.45), and Usage (3.34).

English 201

On the Analytic scales, out of a possible maximum of 6, Spelling (3.47) and Punctuation and Capitalization (3.41) were the highest scores, with 74.7% of students scoring in the middle and high range of 3 to 6 in Spelling, and 77.2% in the same range for Punctuation and Capitalization.

The other qualities were rated at the low level below 3.

Organization and Sequence (2.38) had 39.2% of students in the middle and high range between 3 and 6, and 60.8% in the low range, 0 to 2. Wording and Style (2.76) obtained 63.2% in middle and high range and 36.7% in the low range. Focus and Theme (2.47) had 48.1% in middle and high range and 36.7% of students in the low range.

The same pattern of results was maintained for Ideas (2.68), Choice of Detail and Elaboration (2.62), Sentence Structure (2.62), and Usage (2.62), with more than 40% of the students in low category of 0 to 2 out of a possible 6.

PART III: Spelling

The spelling test administered to English 200 and 201 consisted of 20 words.

A mean performance score of 13.37 out of 20 was attained by the 278 English 200/201 students, 14.11 for the 189 English 200 students, and 11.19 for the English 201 students.

Interpretation of Results

English 200

The GIM score measures the overall effectiveness of a piece of writing on a scale of 0-12 in terms of its level of ideas, language use, and a sense of audience and purpose. The results of the English 200 test show that more than 85% of the 189 students in the sample attained a middle to high level of performance, between 5-12 on the scale, in both written tasks.

The best scores on the Analytic Scales were registered for Spelling and Punctuation and Capitalization.

The scores for the other essential qualities suggest that English 200 students would benefit greatly if instruction were directed specifically to Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Usage involving more sophisticated sentence patterns, and more complex modes of Organization and Sequence than appeared in the scripts. These qualities are essentially considerations of style: the instructional focus for school writing at this grade level. This instruction would help students to gain greater sensitivity for an audience and convey meaning in a more appealing, interesting, and convincing manner than found in many of the papers read.

English 201

The test results for the 79 students in this group on the GIM scale of 0-12, suggest that in terms of thinking and style at least 29.1% of the papers fall within the low range of 0-4. At this level, in the opinion of the markers, the writer's thinking is inconsistent and immature; the paper is difficult to follow; the word choice is often inappropriate; the writer seems to have given little consideration to the audience; and has often missed the point he was supposedly making.

In addition to the low mean performance scores (5.34/5.46) on the GIM scale and the large number of students in the lower middle range, on the Analytic scales one-third to one-half of all the students scored within the low range on every one of the nine essential qualities. These results suggest that the writing needs of the 201 students are not being met.

Combined 200/201

It was felt that in both tasks, many students failed to sense that an audience needs to be informed and entertained. Many papers provided information only, without any attempt to delight the audience.

In Process writing, the students seemed to stay on task because the topic had its own focus and sequential organization. This resulted in many well-organized, focused, and some interesting papers.

On the other hand, the Essay presented problems for many students in the areas of Organization and Sequence, and Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas. Often students with original and mature ideas had insufficient language ability or knowledge of writing techniques to marshal and express their thoughts.

For many essay writers, the topic itself was not clear. They were misled by their own incorrect reading of the article.

It is possible that in Process writing a number of students were misled in their choice of style by the instruction to write "a lively, knowledgeable piece". Instead of clear, concise writing they attempted to produce purple passages.

CHAPTER 6

Comparison of 1982 and 1988 Student Writing

In 1988, the 1982 Writing Assessment tests were re-administered to a small (100 plus) sample of students at each of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. About 60 randomly selected student papers from 1982 had been kept on hand. These two sets of papers were marked by common markers at each grade level. Below are tables presenting a comparison of the results for each grade:

Table 1

Grade 3 Comparison

	1982	1988	Change
GIM on "Story Writing"	5.76	6.37	+
Organization and Sequence.	3.06	3.28	+
Word Choice.	3.09	3.31	+
Focus or Theme	3.13	3.34	+
Ideas.	2.79	3.08	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration.	2.70	2.95	+
Sentence Structure	2.86	3.04	+
Usage.	3.23	3.27	+
Punctuation and Capitalization	2.76	3.06	+
Spelling	3.41	3.23	-
GIM on "Process Writing"	5.44	5.85	+
Organization and Sequence.	2.80	3.15	+
Word Choice.	2.59	2.70	+
Focus or Theme	3.10	3.26	+
Ideas.	2.61	2.69	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration.	2.46	2.55	+
Sentence Structure	2.40	2.39	-
Usage.	2.93	3.07	+
Punctuation and Capitalization	2.47	2.51	+
Spelling	3.13	3.10	-
Spelling Test.	20.41	19.54	-

Table 2

Grade 6 Comparison

	1982	1988	Change
GIM on "Story Writing"	6.26	6.79	+
Organization and Sequence.	3.36	3.52	+
Word Choice.	2.61	2.85	+
Focus or Theme	3.12	3.37	+
Ideas.	2.89	3.04	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration.	2.59	2.83	+
Sentence Structure	2.49	2.67	+
Usage.	2.97	2.87	-
Punctuation and Capitalization	2.56	2.64	+
Spelling	2.91	2.94	+
GIM on "Process Writing"	6.70	6.49	-
Organization and Sequence.	3.53	3.47	-
Word Choice.	3.11	2.93	-
Focus or Theme	3.58	3.49	-
Ideas.	3.08	2.99	-
Choice of Details/Elaboration.	3.17	3.03	-
Sentence Structure	2.94	2.85	-
Usage.	3.27	3.14	-
Punctuation and Capitalization	3.05	3.05	-
Spelling	3.19	3.10	-
Spelling Test.	19.62	18.97	-

Table 3

Grade 9 Comparison

	1982	1988	Change
GIM on "Story Writing"	6.59	6.74	+
Organization and Sequence	3.29	3.20	-
Word Choice	3.14	3.23	+
Focus or Theme	3.48	3.74	+
Ideas	3.32	3.15	-
Choice of Details/Elaboration	3.30	3.14	-
Sentence Structure	2.82	2.86	+
Usage	2.83	2.84	+
Punctuation and Capitalization	3.15	3.40	+
Spelling	3.51	3.70	+
GIM on "Process Writing"	5.84	6.26	+
Organization and Sequence	3.02	3.35	+
Word Choice	2.94	3.12	+
Focus or Theme	3.30	3.49	+
Ideas	2.96	3.13	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration	2.82	3.00	+
Sentence Structure	2.72	3.16	+
Usage	2.94	3.34	+
Punctuation and Capitalization	3.37	3.61	+
Spelling	3.72	3.92	+
Spelling Test	21.51	21.91	+

Table 4

Grade 12 Comparison

	1982	1988	Change
GIM on "Essay Writing"	6.51	7.42	+
Organization and Sequence	3.46	3.72	+
Word Choice	3.27	3.64	+
Focus or Theme	3.51	3.87	+
Ideas	3.13	3.52	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration	3.13	3.49	+
Sentence Structure	3.24	3.54	+
Usage	3.13	3.50	+
Punctuation and Capitalization	3.73	4.02	+
Spelling	3.71	4.05	+
			+
Spelling Test	14.22	14.28	+
Organization and Sequence (Essay Planning)	3.20	3.70	+
Focus or Theme (Essay Planning)	3.15	3.72	+
Choice of Details/Elaboration (Essay Planning)	3.02	3.32	+

Interpretation

The statistician who analyzed the comparison results concluded that none of the observed differences reported above were statistically significant at the .01 level. This may have been largely due to the small sample sizes.

It is worthy to note, however, that a large majority of the changes (exception, grade 6 process writing) are in the positive direction. The fact that most of the changes were positive rather than about equally distributed between gains and losses could lead to the cautious conclusion that there is evidence pointing to an improvement of the writing skills of Manitoba students between 1982 and 1988.

CHAPTER 7

Teacher Questionnaire

A) Summary of Responses
B) Analysis

In this chapter the Summary of Responses to the Teachers' Questionnaire is followed by a brief Analysis.

The Teachers' Questionnaire was designed to obtain information about the instructional context in which students are asked to write: how they achieve their present levels of performance.

The Questionnaire was organized within the constraints of budget and time to obtain information which could be related to the test data, so that a better picture of general practice in schools could be obtained. The Analysis which follows the Summary is an attempt to examine this practice.

Though the information obtained from the Questionnaire was limited to what teachers say they are doing, their responses reflect their attitudes toward good practice and will indicate how these attitudes vary at different grade levels.

The Questionnaire comprises a number of sets of related questions which focus on such practices encouraged by the program and the writing process model as pre- and post-writing activities; the sources of writing topics; purposes and audiences addressed; the use of conferencing; sharing of written products; the use of folders; and attitudes toward writing across the curriculum.

The Analysis which follows the Summary of Responses, explores significant patterns among the different data sources; the Test Results, the Markers' Comments, and the Teachers' Questionnaire.

(A) Grade 4 - Summary of Responses

1. Teacher Distribution
   Of the 185 L. A. teachers who responded, 44.2% taught grade 4 exclusively; 22.2% taught grades 3 and 4; 21.1% taught grades 4 and 5; 12.4% taught grades 4, 5, and 6.

2. Pre-Writing Activities
   Responses indicate that Talking (81.1%), Listening (58.9%), Free Writing (48.1%), and Brainstorming (47.6%) were activities most often used.

   While most other forms were used with fair amount of regularity, a significantly low rate was recorded for Clustering, Mapping (Webbing) which were very seldom used. Drama and Sensory Activities occurred only a few times a year.

3. Students' Own Use of Activities
   Eighty-three point eight percent (83.8%) of teachers noted that jotting of notes (words, phrases, idea) followed by questioning (54.6%) were most often used independently by students. Mapping (18.4%) and Priorizing of ideas (22.2%) were low scores.

4. Writing Topics
Most writing topics appear to be assigned by teachers. Choices from a list and students' own ideas were given equal rating.

5. Purposes
The high NR (no response) rate suggests that this question was not clearly understood. However, the most frequent purposes for which students write appear to be: to explain, to entertain, and to describe.

6. Source of Topics
Students' personal experiences and response to literature appear to be the main sources of writing topics. School subjects and community exposure were used far less.

7. Audiences
Most writing was addressed to peers, the teacher as trusted adult and self. Writing to parents and public was done occasionally.

8. Conferencing
An enthusiastic response (1.1% NR) gave almost equal frequency of use to the three forms of conferencing: student and teacher; group and teacher; student and student.

9. Post-writing Activities
The return indicates that students engage in all aspects of post-writing. The lowest rate was for preparing for publication.

10. Preparation of One or More Drafts
Most teachers indicate that more than half of the writing required one or more drafts.

11. Sharing of Written Products
Reading to groups, use of bulletin board, and libraries account for most common means of sharing. Twenty-two point two percent (22.2%) published in school newspaper and 3.8% in community press. An excellent list of suggestions was received from teachers.

12. Writing Across the Curriculum
In reply to Planning of writing across the curriculum at grade 4 level, 33.5% of teachers answered yes while 61.1% said no. Only one-third of teachers admitted to meeting to discuss the question. Of these, 21.6% met once or twice a year.

13. Folders
Sixty-eight point one percent (68.1%) of teachers were using folders. Many resourceful ideas were submitted.

(B) Analysis

1. It appears that many teachers of grade 4 need to expand their repertoire of pre- and post-writing activities and direct them more specifically at weaknesses in writing revealed by the Assessment. These shortcomings are referred to specifically in the Markers' Comments as being essential to both composing and revising. They are itemized in the test as Ideas,

Choice of Details and Elaboration, Organization and Sequence, and, to a lesser extent, Wording and Style. All of these qualities received low scores. These results suggest the need for more instructional support in generating and elaborating ideas and in developing organizational patterns.

2. Drama and sensory activities are the pre-writing activities which would help students most in generating and elaborating ideas. Both these activities occur least often in classroom, according to the teachers' responses.

   Sensory activities involve the use of pictures, objects, music, sketching, puppetry - learning through things (enactive, iconic, symbolic learning) - in order to move students to the writing stage with more ideas, and better prepared to select, summarize, emphasize, and generalize.

3. The response of teachers to questions on the sharing of written products and the use of folders show that in many schools students appreciate the value of writing real stories and not just completing school writing exercises. The stories they write are read, listened to, typed, placed between illustrated covers, displayed, and enjoyed by other classes as well. These students see themselves as readers and writers.

   One-third of teachers met to plan writing across the curriculum.

(A) Grade 8 - Summary of Responses

1. Teacher Distribution
   Of the 153 respondents, 18.3% teach Language Arts in grades 6, 7, as well as 8: 47.7% teach grade 7 and 8; 29.4% teach grades 8 and 9; while 7.2% teach from grades 8 to 12.

2. Pre-Writing Activities
   The response to this series of questions shows that there is a need for teachers to expand the repertoire of pre-writing activities.

   Talking, Listening, Brainstorming, and Free Writing are the activities that are most used in grade 8 classrooms. Drama, Sensory Activities, Clustering/Mapping are used the least.

   While Interviewing, Viewing, Imaging (Mental Exercises), Writing from leads, Listing are used evidently according to need from a few times a year to once or twice a month, the Questionnaire indicates that there are still those teachers who use pre-writing activities seldom, if at all.

3. Strategies Used by Students
   The traditional strategies of note-taking and outlining predominate.

   Such essential activities as webbing, mapping, and rehearsing were used least.

4. Topics Generated by Students

Forty-one point two percent (41.2%) of responses stated that teacher assignments were the main source of topics students wrote about. An almost equal number said that students choose from a teacher-prepared list.

Actual student-created topics (19.6%) were lowest on list of choices students had.

5. Purposes for Writing

A large number of respondents appeared to be unsure about the series of questions on the purposes for which grade 8 students write.

Most writing was evidently to entertain (narration 17.6%), to describe (description 15.7%), to explain (exposition 17.6%), or to learn (other subject areas (15.7%)).

It appears that students are rarely asked to write instructions (2.0%), to organize something (3.2%), or to persuade (1.3%).

6. Source of Topics

Students' personal experiences and response to literature predominated as sources of writing topics.

Exposure to the community (1.3%) was lowest on list of sources.

7. Audiences

The responses indicate that peers, the teacher (as trusted adult) and self provide the audience for writing.

Parents and the public are used on occasion.

8. Conferencing

There appears to be a healthy interest in conferencing with student-to-student conferencing used most often. Teacher conferencing with individuals and with groups was used frequently.

9. Post-writing Activities

All post-writing activities are used. It is assumed that each activity has a distinctive function and that teachers use the post-writing stage in this manner.

10. Draft Preparation

Eighty percent of the respondents claim that more than half of the assignments were the subjects of two or more drafts.

11. Sharing of Final Products

Most teachers (92.0%) indicated that the papers were read or presented to a group.

Eighty-five percent of those responding said class bulletin board and library were used for display of written products.

Other methods of display included publication in community newspaper and divisional bulletin.

12. Writing Across the Curriculum
Forty-five point eight percent of teachers had met to discuss and plan for writing across the curriculum. Of these, 26.8% met once a year,; 19.6% met 3 to 6 times a year.

13. Folders
Almost 60% of teachers were using folders. Their additional remarks on the questionnaire contain many very useful ideas which should be shared with other teachers.

(B) Analysis

Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, Organization and Sequence, and Focus or Theme were qualities which scored modestly on the Analytic Scales in the Writing test. These results were confirmed by the Markers' Comments and borne out by information obtained from the Teachers' Questionnaire. These responses suggest that many teachers should enlarge their store of pre-writing activities to help students correct these inadequacies in composing and editing. The markers noted the students' inability to expand ideas and elaborate upon situations, commenting upon the rare use of description or character development, the lack of dialogue in narratives, weak introductions and conclusions, and poor development in essays.

The markers claim that few changes were made to scripts between the first and final drafts. Many students seemed unaccustomed to assuming the different roles of thinker, writer, and editor at different times and tried to refine everything at once.

The teachers' responses indicate a rather limited range of classroom pre-writing activities and strategies. Most of the writing topics were teacher-assigned or prepared, drawing upon literature or the imagination. Almost all writing was addressed to peers or to the teacher. On the whole, there appears to be better direction given in the post-writing stage, many classrooms making use of conferencing, editing, and preparing drafts.

English 200

(A) Summary of Responses

1. Teacher Distribution
Of the 119 teachers in English 200, 52.1% taught English 100 and 57.1% taught English 300.

In addition, 37.8% of these teachers taught English 101; 36.1% taught English 301.

Thirty-two point eight percent (32.8%) taught grade 9 Language Arts as well

2. Pre-Writing Activities
The most commonly used activities are talking (69.7%), listening (42.0%), with brainstorming (21.0%) and free-writing (16.8%) and outlining used less frequently.

Drama, Sensory Activities, and Interviewing were seldom used.

Clustering, Webbing, Mapping, Writing leads, and listing were very seldom used.

3. Student Strategies
A significantly high No Response (NR) rate was registered.

The use of traditional classroom strategies was noted: notes (97.5%), outlining (88.2%), posing questions (69.7%), prioritizing (68.1%), and categorizing (60.5%).

4. Topic Generation
Most topics were obtained from a list or directly assigned by teacher.

Student-created topics were seldom used.

5. Common Purposes for Writing
A very high No Response (NR) rate was reported.

To explain (32.8%), to interpret (19.3%), and to learn (14.3%) were regarded as the only significant uses for writing

6. Sources of Topics
Literature provided 79.0% of the source for topics; personal experience accounted for 11.8%.

School subjects and the community were insignificant sources.

7. Audiences
Teachers were most often addressed. Peers and self provided (22.7%) and (16.0%) of weekly writing.

8. Conferencing
Most conferencing was done by students themselves. Groups and teacher met regularly. Individual student and teacher conferences were less frequent.

9. Post-writing Activities
All activities were used with regularity.

10. Number of Drafts
Seventy-eight percent (78.0%) of final products were prepared from one or more drafts.

11. Sharing
This question had a high No Response rate. Eighty-nine point nine percent (89.9%) of those who responded claimed that written work was read or presented to the group. Class bulletin board was used by 42.9%: 30.3% used school newspaper; while 7.6% published in community paper.

12. Writing Across the Curriculum
Fifty-three point eight percent (53.8%) of respondents said there was no planning of writing across the curriculum.

Fifty-four point six percent (54.6%) of total group did not respond to the rest of the question concerning number of meetings held.

However, 27.7% of those who responded met once or twice a year: a further 16.0% met three to five times a year.

13. Folders
Fifty-seven point one percent (57.1%) of teachers did not use folders in their rooms.

English 201

(A) Summary of Responses

1. Teacher Distribution
Of the 83 teachers in the sample, 39.8% teach English 200 as well.

Approximately half (53.0%) teach English 101 and 48.2% teach English 301.

More than half (63.9%) of the 201 teachers teach English 100 and 45.8% teach English 300 as well.

In addition, 19.3% of these teachers teach grade 9 Language Arts as well.

2. Pre-Writing Activities
There appears to be more talking (74.7%), brainstorming (26.5%) and free writing (20.5%) and less listening (27.7%) done in 201 classes than in 200 classes.

Some teachers use drama, interviewing, viewing, writing leads, and listing several times a year.

Clustering/mapping, sensory activities and mental exercises (imaging) are rarely used.

3. Pre-writing Student Strategies
A very high No Response (NR) rate was recorded for most items on the list.

The main strategies students used were jotting of notes (89.2%), outlining (79.5%), questioning (55.4%), and categorizing (50.6%).

4. Topic Generating
Teacher assignments (49.4%) and choice from a list provided (37.3%) accounted for most of the topics used.

It would appear that student-created topics were used occasionally.

5. Purposes for Writing
Most of items had a high No Response (NR) rate.

To learn and explain dominated as purposes for writing.

More than 70% of respondents saw little use for English 201 students to use writing for other purposes.

6. Sources of Topics
Literature (60.2%) was the most important source. Personal experience (30.1%) was used more often than by English 200 teachers.

7. Audiences
The teacher provided the audience most often. Parents and public were used a few times during the year.

8. Conferencing
Group student and teacher conferences and student conferencing with one another were most often used.

Individual students and teacher occurred with fair regularity.

9. Post-writing Activities
Students engaged in all the activities listed with regularity.

10. Drafts Prepared
Sixty-three percent (63.0%) of the written products were prepared from one or more drafts.

11. Sharing
There was a high No Response rate

Of those who responded, 85.5% read or shared writing in groups; 39.8% used the class bulletin board.

12. Writing Across the Curriculum
Fifty-six point six percent (56.6%) of the respondents indicated that there was no plan for writing across the curriculum in their schools.

The question of frequency of meetings met with a high No Response rate (60.2%).

Of those who answered, 28.9% met once or twice a year: 8.4% met three or four times a year.

13. Writing Folders
Fifty-three percent (53.0%) of teachers did not use folders.

Grade 11, Combined English 200 and 201

(A) Summary of Responses

1. Teacher Distribution

Of the 202 teachers of combined English 200-201, 72.8% taught English 200; 59.9% taught English 201.

In addition, these teachers taught in the following classes:
27.2% taught grade 9 Language Arts;
56.9% taught English 100; 44.1% taught English 101;
52.5% taught English 300; and 44.6% taught English 301.

2. Pre-Writing Activities

The traditional activities, Talking (71.8%), Listening (36.1%), and Brainstorming (23.3%) were most frequently used.

Outlining, listing, viewing were used on occasion.

Drama, Sensory Activities, Clustering/Mapping, and Interviewing were seldom used.

3. Student Pre-writing Strategies

The usual strategies, note taking, questioning, outlining, and categorizing, were used.

4. Generating Topics

Forty-five percent (45.0%) of the topics most frequently written about were chosen by students from a list.

Forty-three point one (43.1%) of the topics were teacher-assigned.

Five percent (5.0%) of writing topics came from students themselves.

5. Purposes for Writing

The most common purposes were given as: to explain (36.6%); interpret (15.3%); and to persuade (6.4%).

The high NR (no response) rate shows that this set of questions were the most misunderstood by respondents.

6. Sources of Topics

Overwhelmingly, literature (71.3%) provided the chief source of writing.

Personal experience (19.3%) was next: other subject areas and the community registered (1.5%) and (.5%) respectively.

7. Audiences

Writing addressed to the teacher occurred from several times a month to more than once a week.

Writing to peers and for self occurred a few times a year.

8. Conferencing

Returns indicate the frequent use of all three forms of conferencing throughout the year.

9. Post-writing Activities
Students appear to engage in all the post-writing activities.

10. Drafts Prepared
More than 63% of written products were prepared from one or more drafts.

11. Sharing of Products
High No Response (NR) rate. Eighty-five point five percent (85.5%)of work was read and shared by the group: 39.8% displayed on class bulletin board.

12. Writing Across the Curriculum
Fifty-six percent (56.0%) of respondents said there was no planning of writing across the curriculum. Only 39.8% responded to number of meetings held. Twenty-eight point nine percent (28.9%) of these held meetings once or twice a year.

13. Writing Folders
Thirty-five point four percent (35.4%) of the respondents stated that folders were not used in their classes.

(B) Analysis and Discussion

The areas of grade 11 combined English 200/201 writing which could be improved are those areas related to the generation and expression of ideas. Improvement may be related directly to the selection, quality, and duration of pre-writing activities used in class. Responses to the questionnaire show the dominance of traditional activities being used in the pre-writing stage rather than such group activities as drama, improvisations, interviews, sensory exchanges, debates, panel discussions, lecturettes which help students to generate and elaborate ideas.

The replies to the questions dealing with the source and purposes of writing, and the audiences addressed confirm the pervasive influence of the traditional literary essay on writing instruction in the combined 200/201 group. Much of this instruction may be inappropriate for a large number of students in the sample. The conventional literary essay favours the handling of content supported by the authority of received criticism rather than encouraging a personal exploration by the student of themes, dilemmas, and the author's artistry. Its narrow audience is the teacher as examiner and its purpose for writing is akin to testing rather than revealing or informing.

Almost all teachers reported the extensive use of post-writing activities.

Fifty-seven point four percent (57.4%) of the respondents indicated that there was no planning for writing across the curriculum in their schools. Forty-two point one percent (42.1%) of the teachers indicated that folders were in use in their rooms.

CHAPTER 8

Findings and Recommendations

The purpose of the 1988 Writing Assessment Program was to provide data and feedback about the quality of student writing and the instructional context in which writing was being taught. The results of the Assessment would also indicate the extent to which progress has been made generally in implementing the K-12 integrated English Language Arts program since its introduction into schools in 1982, and measure the specific contribution of the Writing Process model in advancing writing competence among students. The information obtained was to aid local and provincial curriculum development, assist in the professional development of teachers, and thereby enhance the education of students in the Province.

The concluding section of the General Report, therefore, contains in summary the findings and recommendations of the Writing Technical Advisory Committee based upon the Results of the Writing Test, the Comments of the Markers, and the responses of teachers to the Questionnaire.

The conclusions of the Committee and the recommendations which follow are directed to all educators and educational groups involved in the teaching and assessment of student writing.

The Writing Technical Advisory Committee took several innovative steps to improve the reliability of its testing program.

At each grade level, two pieces of writing in different modes were assigned on different days. In each assignment the writer's role, the audience, and purpose were clearly specified. Each piece of writing was rated by, at least two independent and carefully trained markers who were, also, experienced teachers at that grade level. Students were given the opportunity to submit their best rehearsed and researched performance under classroom conditions which allowed the re-writing of drafts.

It is generally accepted, however, that there are a number of constraints to reliable testing: for example, writers vary in their performance from time to time and according to the task assigned; carefully trained markers can disagree; the conditions under which students write can affect their performance.

The writing of students in the grades 4, 8, and 11 samples were assessed first on a General Impression Marking scale (GIM) of 1 to 12, and then scored on nine Analytic scales to measure more specifically their performance in the nine stylistic elements regarded as essential to school writing.

The GIM score measured the communicative effectiveness of the writing; its level of thought, the appropriateness of expression, and the writer's awareness of audience and purpose.

The nine Analytic scores provided additional feedback about the ability of students to choose and control the use of the following elements of writing: Organization and Sequence, Wording and Style, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Spelling.

General Impression Marking

On the basis of the General Impression Marking Scale (GIM) scores, it was found that:

(i) In the three grades tested, a fair percentage of students were judged capable of a high level of proficiency in writing. The distribution of students performing in the high range was:

Grade 4	
Story	12.1%
Report	15.6%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	19.7%
Narrative	23.1%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	16.5%	20.6%	2.5%
Essay	20.1%	25.9%	5.1%

(ii) Most of the writing in the Provincial sample was within the middle range of expectation; that is, though the writing of these students exhibited weaknesses, it was considered to be functional for the particular grade level. The distribution of students performing in the middle range was:

Grade 4	
Story	67.5%
Report	58.5%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	56.5%
Narrative	56.3%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	64.4%	64.6%	68.4%
Essay	62.3%	61.4%	65.8%

(iii) A number of students at each grade scored in the low range, indicative of a need for extensive instruction. The distribution of students performing in the low range was:

Grade 4	
Story	20.3%
Report	25.9%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	23.8%
Narrative	20.6%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	19.1%	14.8%	29.1%
Essay	17.6%	12.7%	29.1%

A comparison of the mean scores, in parentheses, in the different modes of writing assigned revealed the following:

- In grade 4, students performed somewhat better in Story Writing (6.05) than in Report Writing (5.94).
- In grade 8, students did better in Narrative Writing (6.55) than in Persuasive Writing (6.28).
- In grade 11 (combined 200/201), students scored better on the Essay (6.60) than on the Process Writing (6.28) assignment.
- In the English 200 sample, a mean performance mark of (7.02) was recorded for Essay Writing with 5.3% of the essays receiving full marks from one or both markers, while the Process Writing Assessment received a mean score of (6.62).
- The English 201 sample registered a mean of (5.34) for the Essay and (5.46) for the Process Writing.

Analytic Marking

The nine Analytic scale scores for the essential features of school writing were marked holistically. This approach conforms with the notion that in the composing process these elements are interrelated. Their deployment in writing is a matter of choice made in terms of purpose, audience, and stance or point of view.

(i) In the three grades tested the best performances were registered in the area of mechanics and conventions of writing: Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Usage.

The lower scores registered in Usage were often caused by careless and inaccurate syntax: faulty subject/verb, sentence fragments, and, in grade 11, run-on sentences and poor pronoun reference.

(ii) The weakest scores in all grades were obtained in the areas of Content (Ideas) and Expression; namely, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Theme or Focus, Organization and Sequence, Sentence Structure, and Wording and Style.

These areas involve the higher order of thinking and language skills such as the ability to generate, interpret, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate ideas and to present opinions in an orderly progression with a sense of purpose.

In each of these six essential areas between 20 - 30% of all students in the sample were functioning at a low level.

Recommendations

1. In all grades the best performance scores were obtained in the mechanics and conventions of writing; Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Usage.

   It is recommended that:

   - **The strong Spelling and Punctuation program in schools be maintained and incorporated into pre- and post-writing activities in imaginative ways without imposing restraints on the students' expression of thoughts and feelings.**

     Where weak usage occurs, particularly in cases from weaker language background, instruction at the sentence level be given. This instruction should not be divorced from students' actual writing.

2. On the Analytic scales, weak scores were recorded for all grades in the important areas of Content and Expression; namely Ideas, Organization and Sequence, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, Theme or Focus, Sentence Structure, and Wording and Style.

These six components of the composing process involve such high order thinking and language skills as generating, interpreting, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating ideas and presenting them in orderly progression with a sense of purpose.

In each of these six elements, 20% - 30% of all students were functioning at the low level. The writing of these students was rated weak because of the poverty or superficiality of ideas. Students in this group who had original ideas often lacked the ability to organize and express their thoughts effectively.

The results show most students in the sample need instruction in procedures which would help them explore ideas sensitively and systematically in order to determine what they wish to say.

Replies to the questionnaire suggest that most teachers use only a limited range of pre-writing activities. The use of effective improvised classroom drama is significantly low.

A particular weakness in the writing at all grades was the inability of students to clarify and elaborate upon their ideas.

The markers in their comments refer to the lack of editing done between first and final drafts and the failure of students to use the post-writing stage to elaborate ideas and to link purpose, audience, and voice in their writing.

From the test results and markers' comments, it seems necessary that students be given more help at the post-writing stage in learning how to focus, sustain, and support their ideas, and to master strategies that would make their writing more vivid and better organized.

Specific help should be given in supporting assertions, qualifying generalizations by using modifiers, phrases, and clauses.

It is recommended that:

- **Provincial and local inservice agencies provide workshops and discussions for teachers to examine the writing process. These workshops should aim to help teachers remove many of the frustrations and difficulties many students feel about writing by:**

  (a) promoting useful pre-writing activities which promote the generation and elaboration of ideas, including the use of classroom drama, discussion, brainstorming, and role-playing;

  (b) assisting teachers to apply and adapt small group instruction to local conditions;

  (c) viewing and discussing tapes of good classroom practices, particularly the viewing of tapes dealing with initiating student writing;

(d) helping teachers to formulate topics for student writing and expand the uses and amounts of writing done in school; and

(e) exploring more fully the relationship between expressive (personal) writing and transactional (informational) writing.

3. Responses to the Questionnaire indicate an interest in evaluation generally and a growing use of peer evaluation and anthologies (folders) of written products as well as an improved attitude among teachers to provincial testing since 1982.

   The interest of teachers in holistic methods of marking stems from the need for accurate and efficient methods of monitoring writing growth.

   Large class sizes, mounting parental and public interest, and an anticipated increase in the amount of writing expected to be marked, demand that the methods of monitoring be visible, reliable, progressive in nature and economical in the use of the teachers' time.

   It is recommended that:

- **The Curriculum Branch continue to initiate and run inservices and workshops on evaluation of writing so that teachers throughout the Province are exposed to successful approaches and criteria for evaluation. These approaches should include ways of commenting positively on writing that would generally help the student.**

4. According to the test results, almost 30% of the English 201 students were functioning at a low level. Approximately 50% of all the 201 students were in need of instruction in all aspects of writing.

   These results indicate the need for changes in strategies, sources, topics, and uses of writing from those associated with the traditional literary essay to the kinds of writing which would place these students at the centre of their own learning by encouraging a constant interaction between the individual viewpoint of these students and the new information they receive from such sources as other subject areas and the community through personal contact, or newspaper or magazine articles. In literature they should be responding in a personal way to situations, themes, characters, and the author's artistry.

- **It is recommended that the writing needs of English 201 students receive immediate attention.**

5. Writing does not exist in isolation. It is one among four major language skills used across the curriculum.

   Returns on the Questionnaire show that the planning of writing across the curriculum was not a priority among school staffs in Manitoba.

   Approximately 40% of English Language Arts teachers meet their colleagues from other subject areas to plan writing and other language needs. About 30% of these said they met only once or twice a year for that purpose.

Apart from note-taking and testing, it was clear that most school staffs did not see writing as a major learning tool. A valuable opportunity is being lost for students to learn about things for themselves.

Just as students learn by doing before they can generalize and abstract for themselves, so do they learn by speaking, reading, and writing before they can come to grips with subject area concepts and vocabulary.

It is this heuristic quality that is at the heart of writing across the curriculum. Students at all grade levels must be given the opportunity to talk and write about their work in personal ways for the new Knowledge to mix with past Knowledge and experience.

It is recommended that:

- **Teachers of all subject areas work closely together and initiate inquiry into the kinds of writing students need and teachers expect in different contexts.**

  Teachers of self-contained classrooms use language arts for teaching writing skills required in the different subject areas and use the content of other subjects to teach language arts.

  Administrators encourage teaming, cross-disciplinary teaching, and other administrative devices to provide opportunities for teachers of other subject areas to meet and plan co-operatively with English Language Arts teachers.

  Provincial and local inservice agencies organize workshops to help teachers of all subject areas examine the curriculum and consider how language plays an important part in learning.

6. While the results of the comparison between the 1982 and 1988 student writing give some evidence of overall improvement, specific areas of weakness are still evident in the 1988 assessment results.

   Teachers from kindergarten to beyond high school face a challenge to develop writing competence in students through learning strategies and environments to learning which while emphasizing a process approach to learning, recognizes the importance of knowledge.

   In an age of technology there is a need to access and communicate large amounts of information. The ability to write remains a basic prerequisite to success in our society.

   This challenge to serve youth and society under the fluid conditions that prevail today demands the collective effort of all educators.

   It is recommended that:

- **The Department of Education and Training undertake the reorganization of the Manitoba Writing Project in conjunction with the universities, community colleges, faculties of education, Manitoba Teachers' Society, and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.**

The purpose of this Project would be:

(i) to promote interest in the teaching of writing at all levels.

(ii) to provide summer workshops, courses with university accreditation for teachers.

(iii) to develop a pool or cadre of teachers of writing available for local inservice education.

(iv) to act as a clearing house for ideas, strategies, research and study in writing, and to maintain contact with similar organizations throughout the world.

(v) to promote interest in student writing.

(vi) to make and circulate tapes of good writing practices.

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A P P E N D I X

T E A C H E R S U R V E Y

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE GRADE 4 ENGLISH

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

7.6% grade 1	12.4% grade 6	0.0% English/anglais 101
7.6% grade 2	8.6% grade 7	0.0% English/anglais 200
22.2% grade 3	7.0% grade 8	0.0% English/anglais 201
97.3% grade 4	3.8% grade 9	0.0% English/anglais 300
21.1% grade 5	.5% English/anglais 100	0.0% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Grade 4 English program. (Sample size = 185)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	2.7%	16.2%	81.1%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	13.5%	61.1%	18.9%	3.2%	3.2%
c.	Brainstorming	0.0%	9.2%	42.7%	47.6%	.5%
d.	Drama	12.4%	71.4%	11.4%	3.2%	1.6%
e.	Viewing	8.6%	39.5%	34.6%	10.3%	7.0%
f.	Listening	2.7%	13.5%	24.3%	58.9%	.5%
g.	Sensory Activities	13.0%	51.4%	22.7%	7.6%	5.4%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging).	6.5%	30.3%	44.3%	15.7%	3.2%
i.	Free Writing	1.1%	18.9%	30.3%	48.1%	1.6%
j.	Writing Leads	5.4%	38.9%	39.5%	13.5%	2.7%
k.	Drawing	8.1%	35.1%	35.7%	18.4%	2.7%
l.	Outlining	5.4%	48.1%	36.8%	7.0%	2.7%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	20.0%	40.0%	25.9%	9.7%	4.3%
n.	Listing	8.1%	34.1%	43.8%	12.4%	1.6%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

54.6% posing questions to be explored

62.2% drawing pictures/diagrams

83.8% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

22.2% priorizing

42.7% outlining

35.7% webbing

44.3% categorizing

18.4% mapping

28.1% rehearsing

7.6% other (please specify):_____

_____

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	41.6%	21.1%	28.1%	3.8%	5.4%
students choose from a list of possible topics	25.4%	45.9%	18.4%	1.1%	8.6%
created by student	29.2%	25.9%	36.2%	1.6%	7.0%
other (please specify)	1.1%	2.2%	5.4%	8.1%	83.2%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	11.4%	16.2%	14.1%	13.5%	9.7%	35.1%
to persuade	.5	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.2	91.9
to entertain	31.4	11.9	11.4	8.6	7.0	29.7
to inform	5.4	14.6	14.1	11.9	5.4	48.6
to describe	15.1	20.5	19.5	8.6	10.3	25.9
to debate	0.0	0.0	0.0	.5	1.1	98.4
to interpret	0.5	1.6	4.3	1.1	2.7	89.7
other (please specify)	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	97.3
to instruct	0.0	0.0	4.6	1.5	3.1	90.8
to play with language	5.9	7.0	4.3	9.2	12.4	61.1
to explore	3.8	2.2	3.2	5.4	2.2	83.2
to discover	1.6	4.9	6.5	8.1	8.1	70.8
to clarify	0.0	1.1	1.1	2.7	4.3	90.8
to organize	2.2	4.3	4.9	8.6	9.7	70.3
to learn	13.0	7.0	5.4	7.0	7.6	60.0

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	2.7%	4.9%	13.0%	20.5%	36.2%	22.7%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	2.7	8.6	18.9	29.7	23.8	16.2
topics in other school subjects	14.1	23.8	30.8	14.1	5.9	11.4
in response to literature	24.9	31.4	18.9	9.2	4.3	11.4
students' personal experience	53.0	27.6	8.1	4.9	1.6	4.9

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?
1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	4.9%	15.1%	27.6%	44.9%	7.6%
b. Peers	0.5%	13.0%	48.1%	34.6%	3.8%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	1.1%	19.5%	34.6%	41.1%	3.8%
d. Parents	12.4%	62.2%	15.7%	1.6%	8.1%
e. Public.	21.6%	55.7%	13.5%	2.2%	7.0%
f. Other (please specify). . .	1.1%	5.4%	1.6%	1.1%	90.8%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	1.6%	24.3%	42.7%	30.3%	1.1%
b. group student-teacher conferences	3.2%	29.7%	40.5%	26.5%	0.0%
c. students conferencing with each other.	2.2%	21.6%	46.5%	29.7%	0.0%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	2.7%	9.2%	48.1%	39.5%	0.5%
b. Revising.	1.6%	10.3%	59.5%	28.1%	0.5%
c. Editing	1.6%	10.8%	56.8%	30.3%	0.5%
d. Rewriting for publication .	7.0%	32.4%	49.2%	9.7%	1.6%
e. Proofreading.	0.0%	9.2%	51.9%	38.4%	0.5%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	9.7%	53.0%	35.1%	2.2%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
1.1%	3.8%	5.9%	8.1%	5.9%	15.1%	11.4%	13.0%	13.0%	13.5%	6.5%	2.7%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

93.0% put on class bulletin board

50.8% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

29.2% placed in school library

22.2% published in school newspaper

3.8% published in community newspaper

96.8% read or presented to a group

19.5% other (please specify)_____

_____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 33.5% YES 61.1% NO 5.4% NR

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

21.6% once or twice a year

7.6% 3 - 5 times a year

4.9% 6 or more times a year.

65.9% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 68.1% YES 29.2% NO 2.7% NR

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

_____

_____

_____

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE GRADE 8 ENGLISH

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

9.8% grade 1	18.3% grade 6	2.0% English/anglais 101
10.5% grade 2	47.7% grade 7	7.2% English/anglais 200
10.5% grade 3	92.2% grade 8	5.9% English/anglais 201
12.4% grade 4	29.4% grade 9	3.9% English/anglais 300
13.7% grade 5	6.5% English/anglais 100	4.6% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Grade 8 English program. (Sample size = 153)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Talking	0.7%	2.6%	23.5%	72.5%	0.7%
b. Interviewing	16.3%	59.5%	17.0%	3.9%	3.3%
c. Brainstorming	0.7%	13.7%	51.6%	34.0%	0.0%
d. Drama	17.0%	57.5%	22.9%	2.6%	0.0%
e. Viewing	7.2%	54.9%	26.8%	7.2%	3.9%
f. Listening	0.7%	22.9%	32.7%	42.5%	1.3%
g. Sensory Activities	23.5%	48.4%	16.3%	7.2%	4.6%
h. Mental Exercises (Imaging).	9.2%	46.4%	30.7%	11.8%	2.0%
i. Free Writing	3.3%	21.6%	39.2%	33.3%	2.6%
j. Writing Leads	7.8%	43.1%	40.5%	5.9%	2.6%
k. Drawing	15.0%	46.4%	32.0%	3.9%	2.6%
l. Outlining	3.9%	42.5%	39.9%	9.8%	3.9%
m. Clustering/Mapping	20.9%	44.4%	22.9%	8.5%	3.3%
n. Listing	2.6%	41.2%	43.8%	10.5%	2.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

49.0% posing questions to be explored

47.1% drawing pictures/diagrams

87.6% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

37.9% priorizing

71.2% outlining

28.8% webbing

49.7% categorizing

21.6% mapping

33.3% rehearsing

5.2% other (please specify):_____

_____

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	41.2%	20.9%	31.4%	0.7%	5.9%
students choose from a list of possible topics	35.3%	43.8%	13.1%	0.7%	7.2%
created by student	19.6%	31.4%	39.2%	0.7%	9.2%
other (please specify)	0.7%	0.7%	1.3%	9.8%	87.6%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	17.6%	19.6%	16.3%	7.8%	8.5%	30.1%
to persuade	1.3	1.3	7.8	11.1	9.8	68.6
to entertain	17.6	11.1	13.7	9.8	11.1	36.6
to inform	5.9	12.4	9.2	7.8	6.5	58.2
to describe	15.7	17.6	9.8	13.7	12.4	30.1
to debate	0.0	0.7	1.3	2.0	2.6	93.5
to interpret	5.9	7.2	6.5	6.5	2.0	71.9
other (please specify)	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	98.0
to instruct	2.0	0.0	1.3	0.7	2.0	94.1
to play with language	2.6	3.3	7.8	5.2	7.2	73.9
to explore	3.3	6.5	2.0	5.9	4.6	77.8
to discover	3.3	3.3	3.9	3.9	5.9	79.7
to clarify	0.7	2.6	3.3	4.6	2.0	86.9
to organize	3.3	5.2	4.6	8.5	8.5	69.9
to learn	15.7	3.9	5.2	4.6	8.5	62.1

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	5.2%	4.6%	22.2%	24.2%	20.9%	22.9%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	1.3	7.8	16.3	26.8	28.8	19.0
topics in other school subjects	7.2	11.8	28.1	17.0	20.3	15.7
in response to literature	43.1	33.3	10.5	5.2	0.7	7.2
students' personal experience	40.5	37.3	13.1	2.0	1.3	5.9

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	3.9%	28.1%	35.3%	28.8%	3.9%
b. Peers	0.0%	18.3%	47.7%	30.7%	3.3%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	2.6%	20.3%	45.1%	28.1%	3.9%
d. Parents	31.4%	47.7%	10.5%	1.3%	9.2%
e. Public.	19.0%	58.8%	13.1%	2.0%	7.2%
f. Other (please specify). . .	3.9%	5.2%	3.3%	0.0%	87.6%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	2.6%	34.6%	40.5%	20.9%	1.3%
b. group student-teacher conferences	7.2%	28.8%	44.4%	17.0%	2.6%
c. students conferencing with each other.	2.6%	18.3%	38.6%	39.2%	1.3%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	2.0%	15.7%	49.0%	31.4%	2.0%
b. Revising.	0.0%	12.4%	60.1%	25.5%	2.0%
c. Editing	0.7%	15.0%	53.6%	28.1%	2.6%
d. Rewriting for publication .	15.7%	36.6%	35.3%	7.2%	5.2%
e. Proofreading.	0.0%	12.4%	51.0%	35.3%	1.3%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	15.7%	51.0%	32.0%	1.3%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.7%	4.6%	6.5%	8.5%	8.5%	13.1%	10.5%	16.3%	13.7%	11.8%	3.9%	2.0%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

185.0% put on class bulletin board

28.8% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

17.6% placed in school library

34.6% published in school newspaper

110.5% published in community newspaper

192.2% read or presented to a group

13.1% other (please specify)_____

_____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 45.8% YES 85.7% NO 7.2% NR

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

26.8% once or twice a year

12.4% 3 - 5 times a year

7.2% 6 or more times a year.

53.6% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 59.5% YES 57.1% NO 2.6% NR

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

_____

_____

_____

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH 200 & 201 COMBINED

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.5% grade 1	1.0% grade 6	44.1% English/anglais 101
0.5% grade 2	6.4% grade 7	72.8% English/anglais 200
0.5% grade 3	8.4% grade 8	59.9% English/anglais 201
0.5% grade 4	27.2% grade 9	52.5% English/anglais 300
0.5% grade 5	56.9% English/anglais 100	44.6% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level English 200 & 201 Combined program. (Sample size = 202)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	1.0%	5.0%	22.3%	71.8%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	27.7%	52.0%	12.9%	2.0%	5.4%
c.	Brainstorming	2.0%	21.8%	52.0%	23.3%	1.0%
d.	Drama	17.8%	60.9%	15.3%	3.0%	3.0%
e.	Viewing	7.4%	51.0%	33.7%	4.0%	4.0%
f.	Listening	2.5%	24.3%	34.7%	36.1%	2.5%
g.	Sensory Activities	37.6%	40.6%	14.9%	1.5%	5.4%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging).	22.3%	42.6%	23.8%	7.4%	4.0%
i.	Free Writing	13.4%	29.7%	35.6%	18.3%	3.0%
j.	Writing Leads	16.8%	42.6%	28.2%	7.9%	4.5%
k.	Drawing	53.5%	36.1%	5.0%	0.5%	5.0%
l.	Outlining	6.4%	30.7%	47.5%	12.9%	2.5%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	35.6%	33.7%	19.8%	4.0%	6.9%
n.	Listing	7.9%	39.6%	39.1%	11.4%	2.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

63.9% posing questions to be explored

18.8% drawing pictures/diagrams

94.1% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

60.9% priorizing

84.7% outlining

16.3% webbing

56.4% categorizing

10.9% mapping

22.3% rehearsing

5.0% other (please specify):_____

_____

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	43.1	28.7%	16.8%	1.5%	9.9%
students choose from a list of possible topics	45.0%	37.1%	9.4%	1.0%	7.4%
created by student	5.0%	26.7%	52.0%	1.0%	15.3%
other (please specify)	2.0%	1.0%	1.5%	3.5%	92.1%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	36.6%	19.3%	7.9%	6.9%	5.0%	24.3%
to persuade	6.4	13.4	14.9	9.4	8.4	47.5
to entertain	1.5	4.5	5.0	5.9	9.9	73.3
to inform	3.0	8.9	10.9	11.4	7.9	57.9
to describe	4.0	7.9	11.9	11.4	10.9	54.0
to debate	1.5	2.0	2.0	3.5	2.0	89.1
to interpret	15.3	14.9	9.4	12.4	8.9	39.1
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	.5	.5	99.0
to instruct	0.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	1.5	92.6
to play with language	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	5.9	87.6
to explore	4.5	4.5	2.0	3.0	4.5	81.7
to discover	0.5	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.0	88.1
to clarify	1.5	6.4	7.9	7.9	7.9	68.3
to organize	2.0	3.0	10.4	6.4	9.4	68.3
to learn	13.4	1.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	73.3

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	2.0%	12.4%	36.1%	17.3%	9.4%	22.8%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.5	3.0	9.9	27.2	24.3	35.1
topics in other school subjects	1.5	3.5	21.3	16.8	20.3	36.6
in response to literature	71.3	21.3	1.5	0.0	0.0	5.9
students' personal experience	19.3	55.0	14.9	3.0	1.5	6.4

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	13.4%	38.1%	25.2%	15.8%	7.4%
b. Peers	1.0%	33.2%	43.1%	17.8%	5.0%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	1.5%	14.4%	50.5%	30.7%	3.0%
d. Parents	38.6%	42.6%	5.9%	1.0%	11.9%
e. Public.	15.3%	47.5%	22.3%	3.0%	11.9%
f. Other (please specify). . .	1.5%	4.0%	3.0%	0.5%	91.1%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	3.0%	43.6%	34.2%	16.3%	3.0%
b. group student-teacher conferences	6.4%	33.7%	33.2%	22.8%	4.0%
c. students conferencing with each other.	5.0%	23.3%	43.6%	24.8%	3.5%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	2.5%	16.8%	59.9%	17.8%	3.0%
b. Revising.	0.0%	18.8%	57.9%	20.3%	3.0%
c. Editing	1.0%	20.8%	58.4%	16.8%	3.0%
d. Rewriting for publication .	23.8%	39.6%	24.8%	4.5%	7.4%
e. Proofreading.	2.0%	20.8%	50.0%	23.8%	3.5%
f. Sharing with others	2.0%	29.2%	42.6%	22.8%	3.5%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	3.0%	4.5%	12.9%	4.0%	16.8%	13.9%	12.4%	13.4%	9.9%	5.9%	3.5%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

41.6% put on class bulletin board

9.4% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

7.9% placed in school library

25.7% published in school newspaper

5.9% published in community newspaper

88.1% read or presented to a group

15.8% other (please specify)_____

_____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 42.6% YES 55.0% NO 2.5% NR

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

28.2% once or twice a year

12.9% 3 - 5 times a year

2.0% 6 or more times a year.

56.9% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 42.1% YES 41.7% NO 2.5% NR

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

_____

_____

_____

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH 200

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.8%	grade 1	1.7%	grade 6	37.8%	English/anglais 101
0.8%	grade 2	6.7%	grade 7	95.8%	English/anglais 200
0.8%	grade 3	9.2%	grade 8	36.1%	English/anglais 201
0.8%	grade 4	32.8%	grade 9	57.1%	English/anglais 300
0.0%	grade 5	52.1%	English/anglais 100	42.0%	English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level English 200 program. (Sample size = 119)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	4.2%	26.1%	69.7%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	26.9%	55.5%	12.6%	1.7%	3.4%
c.	Brainstorming	1.7%	22.7%	54.6%	21.0%	0.0%
d.	Drama	17.6%	62.2%	16.8%	1.7%	1.7%
e.	Viewing	5.9%	52.1%	36.1%	3.4%	2.5%
f.	Listening	2.5%	18.5%	35.3%	42.0%	1.7%
g.	Sensory Activities	39.5%	42.0%	13.4%	0.8%	4.2%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging)	21.8%	44.5%	25.2%	5.9%	2.5%
i.	Free Writing	12.6%	37.8%	31.1%	16.8%	1.7%
j.	Writing Leads	19.3%	40.3%	31.1%	8.4%	0.8%
k.	Drawing	55.5%	35.3%	6.7%	0.0%	2.5%
l.	Outlining	4.2%	37.0%	42.9%	14.3%	1.7%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	35.3%	37.0%	21.0%	2.5%	4.2%
n.	Listing	10.9%	41.2%	37.0%	10.1%	0.8%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

69.7% posing questions to be explored

19.3% drawing pictures/diagrams

97.5% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

68.1% priorizing

88.2% outlining

18.5% webbing

60.5% categorizing

11.8% mapping

27.7% rehearsing

5.9% other (please specify):_____

_____

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	38.7%	34.5%	15.1%	0.8%	10.9%
students choose from a list of possible topics	50.4%	34.5%	8.4%	0.8%	5.9%
created by student	5.0%	25.2%	57.1%	0.8%	11.8%
other (please specify)	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%	4.2%	92.4%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	32.8%	21.8%	6.7%	6.7%	5.0%	26.9%
to persuade	7.6	11.8	19.3	6.7	12.6	42.0
to entertain	1.7	6.7	3.4	6.7	5.9	75.6
to inform	2.5	6.7	12.6	12.6	7.6	58.0
to describe	1.7	5.9	8.4	11.8	14.3	57.0
to debate	0.8	1.7	0.8	4.2	2.5	89.9
to interpret	19.3	14.3	10.1	10.9	5.0	40.3
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	99.2
to instruct	0.0	2.5	0.8	4.2	0.8	91.6
to play with language	2.5	1.7	1.7	7.6	0.8	84.0
to explore	4.2	4.2	3.4	1.7	4.2	82.4
to discover	0.8	1.7	0.8	5.0	2.5	89.1
to clarify	1.7	5.9	9.2	7.6	7.6	68.1
to organize	2.5	4.2	7.6	5.9	9.2	69.7
to learn	14.3	1.7	5.0	3.4	4.2	71.4

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	1.7%	14.3%	31.9%	22.7%	9.2%	20.2%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.0	3.4	11.8	25.2	27.7	31.9
topics in other school subjects	1.7	5.0	20.2	16.8	21.0	35.3
in response to literature	79.0	15.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
students' personal experience	11.8	55.5	20.2	4.2	1.7	6.7

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	15.1%	40.3%	23.5%	16.0%	5.0%
b. Peers	1.7%	34.5%	37.8%	22.7%	3.4%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	0.8%	13.4%	53.8%	29.4%	2.5%
d. Parents	39.5%	43.7%	7.6%	1.7%	7.6%
e. Public.	15.1%	52.1%	25.2%	0.8%	6.7%
f. Other (please specify). . .	0.8%	4.2%	2.5%	0.8%	91.6%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	3.4%	49.6%	29.4%	15.1%	2.5%
b. group student-teacher conferences	7.6%	31.1%	37.8%	19.3%	4.2%
c. students conferencing with each other.	5.9%	20.2%	43.7%	27.7%	2.5%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	1.7%	17.6%	61.3%	16.8%	2.5%
b. Revising.	0.1%	13.4%	64.7%	19.3%	2.5%
c. Editing	0.8%	19.3%	59.7%	17.6%	2.5%
d. Rewriting for publication .	17.6%	42.9%	28.6%	3.4%	7.6%
e. Proofreading.	1.7%	18.5%	51.3%	24.4%	4.2%
f. Sharing with others	2.5%	27.7%	40.3%	25.2%	4.2%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	1.7%	1.7%	13.4%	1.7%	17.6%	13.4%	14.3%	13.4%	12.6%	6.7%	3.4%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

42.9% put on class bulletin board

13.4% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

10.1% placed in school library

30.3% published in school newspaper

7.6% published in community newspaper

89.9% read or presented to a group

17.6% other (please specify)_____

_____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 45.4% YES 53.8% NO 0.8% NR

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

27.7% once or twice a year

16.0% 3 - 5 times a year

1.7% 6 or more times a year.

54.6% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 41.2% YES 57.1% NO 1.7 NR

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

_____

_____

_____

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH 201

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

100.0% grade 1	100.0% grade 6	53.0% English/anglais 101
100.0% grade 2	7.2% grade 7	39.8% English/anglais 200
100.0% grade 3	19.3% grade 8	94.0% English/anglais 201
100.0% grade 4	63.9% grade 9	45.8% English/anglais 300
100.0% grade 5	25.0% English/anglais 100	48.2% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level English 201 program. (Sample size = 83)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	2.4%	6.0%	16.9%	74.7%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	28.9%	47.0%	13.3%	2.4%	8.4%
c.	Brainstorming	2.4%	20.5%	48.2%	26.5%	2.4%
d.	Drama	18.1%	59.0%	13.3%	4.8%	4.8%
e.	Viewing	9.6%	49.4%	30.1%	4.8%	6.0%
f.	Listening	2.4%	32.5%	33.7%	27.7%	3.6%
g.	Sensory Activities	34.9%	38.6%	16.9%	2.4%	7.2%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging)	22.9%	39.8%	21.7%	9.6%	6.0%
i.	Free Writing	14.5%	18.1%	42.2%	20.5%	4.8%
j.	Writing Leads	13.3%	45.8%	24.1%	7.2%	9.6%
k.	Drawing	50.6%	37.3%	2.4%	1.2%	8.4%
l.	Outlining	9.6%	21.7%	54.2%	10.8%	3.6%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	36.1%	28.9%	18.1%	6.0%	10.8%
n.	Listing	3.6%	37.3%	42.2%	13.3%	3.6%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

55.4% posing questions to be explored

18.1% drawing pictures/diagrams

89.2% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

50.6% priorizing

79.5% outlining

13.3% webbing

50.6% categorizing

9.6% mapping

14.5% rehearsing

3.6% other (please specify):_____

_____

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	49.4%	20.5%	19.3%	2.4%	8.4%
students choose from a list of possible topics	37.3%	41.0%	10.8%	1.2%	9.6%
created by student	4.8%	28.9%	44.6%	1.2%	20.5%
other (please specify)	2.4%	2.4%	1.2%	2.4%	91.6%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency 1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	42.2%	15.7%	9.6%	7.2%	4.8%	20.5%
to persuade	4.8	15.7	8.4	13.3	2.4	55.4
to entertain	1.2	1.2	7.2	4.8	15.7	69.9
to inform	3.6	12.0	8.4	9.6	8.4	57.8
to describe	7.2	10.8	16.9	10.8	6.0	48.2
to debate	2.4	2.4	3.6	2.4	1.2	88.0
to interpret	9.6	15.7	8.4	14.5	14.5	37.3
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	98.8
to instruct	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.2	2.4	94.0
to play with language	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.0	3.6	92.8
to explore	4.8	4.8	0.0	4.8	4.8	80.7
to discover	0.0	3.6	3.6	2.4	3.6	86.7
to clarify	1.2	7.2	6.0	8.4	8.4	68.7
to organize	1.2	1.2	14.5	7.2	9.6	66.3
to learn	12.0	0.0	2.4	4.8	4.8	75.9

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency 1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	2.4%	9.6%	42.2%	9.6%	9.6%	26.5%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	1.2	2.4	7.2	30.1	19.3	39.8
topics in other school subjects	1.2	1.2	22.9	16.9	19.3	38.6
in response to literature	60.2	30.1	3.6	0.0	0.0	6.0
students' personal experience	30.1	54.2	7.2	1.2	1.2	6.0

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self	10.8%	34.9%	27.7%	15.7%	10.8%
b. Peers	0.0%	31.3%	50.6%	10.8%	7.2%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult)	2.4%	15.7%	45.8%	32.5%	3.6%
d. Parents	37.3%	41.0%	3.6%	0.0%	18.1%
e. Public	15.7%	41.0%	18.1%	6.0%	19.3%
f. Other (please specify)	2.4%	3.6%	3.6%	0.0%	90.4%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	2.4%	34.9%	41.0%	18.1%	3.6%
b. group student-teacher conferences	4.8%	37.3%	26.5%	27.7%	3.6%
c. students conferencing with each other	3.6%	27.7%	43.4%	20.5%	4.8%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following (**use the scale from question 7**)?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting	3.6%	15.7%	57.8%	19.3%	3.6%
b. Revising	0.0%	26.5%	48.2%	21.7%	3.6%
c. Editing	1.2%	22.9%	56.6%	15.7%	3.6%
d. Rewriting for publication	32.5%	34.9%	19.3%	6.0%	7.2%
e. Proofreading	2.4%	24.1%	48.2%	22.9%	2.4%
f. Sharing with others	1.2%	31.3%	45.8%	19.3%	2.4%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	4.8%	8.4%	12.0%	7.2%	15.7%	14.5%	9.6%	13.3%	6.0%	4.8%	3.6%

11. How are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

39.8% put on class bulletin board

3.6% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

4.8% placed in school library

19.3% published in school newspaper

3.6% published in community newspaper

85.5% read or presented to a group

13.3% other (please specify)_____

_____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 38.6% YES 56.6% NO 4.8% NR

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

28.9% once or twice a year

8.4% 3 - 5 times a year

2.4% 6 or more times a year.

60.2% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 43.4% YES 25.0% NO 3.6% NR

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

_____

_____

_____